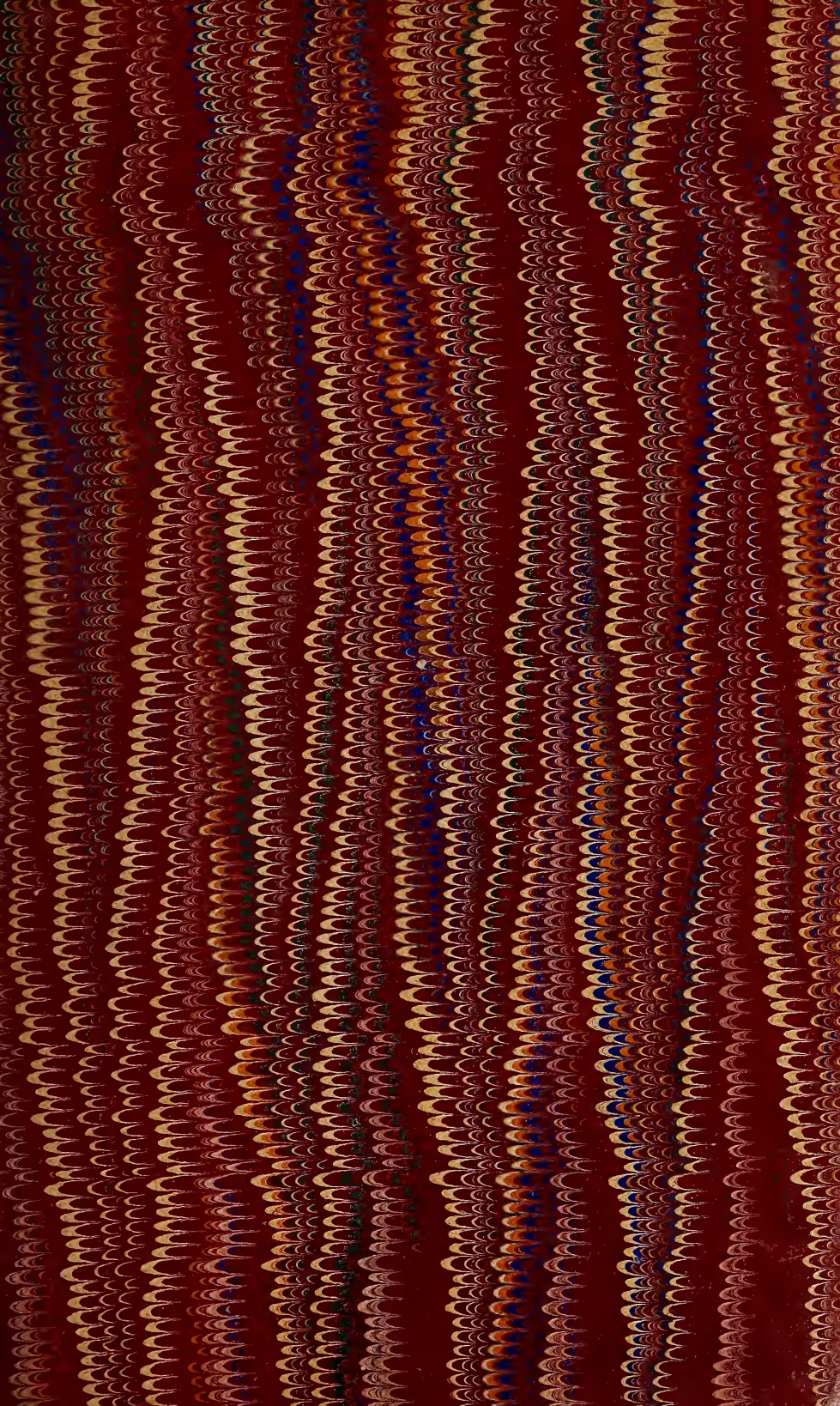


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THE ST. JAMES'S LECTURES.

COMPANIONS

FOR

THE DEVOUT LIFE:

SIX LECTURES

DELIVERED IN ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, PICCADILLY,

A.D. 1875.



WITH A PREFACE

17
1063a
BY REV. J. E. KEMPE, M.A.

RECTOR.

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PREFACE.

A FEW words seem to be needed by way of explanation of the nature and purpose of the Discourses contained in this volume.

Having been primarily designed for the pulpit of a parish church, they have too much of an homiletical character to answer to the description of reviews or essays; but as they were also intended for publication after delivery, on that account, as well as from the nature of their subjects, more literary labour has been bestowed upon them than is usual, or practicable, or perhaps even desirable, in the case of ordinary sermons. The test which the late Duke of Wellington is said to have proposed for a parliamentary effort—"Does it read well? If it does, it was not a good speech"—is not wholly inapplicable to a sermon. The *labor limæ* is apt to dissipate that flavour of spontaneousness and to weaken that magnetic influence of personal conviction and feeling to which extemporaneous addresses owe so much of their peculiar attraction and power. It demands more art than is commonly or easily attainable to combine the recommendations peculiar to written compositions with the particular kind of effect which is

essential to oratorical success. At the same time, a composition which has fallen flat from the pulpit, as Burke's speeches did upon the House, may be well suited for attentive perusal, and amply repay it both in interest and in edification. If the two results of immediate acceptance and thoughtful satisfaction in after study are attained by the same speaker, an ideal is realised which leaves little to be desired. It would not be becoming to say here how nearly this has been done in the present volume, but there need be no hesitation in expressing confidence that it has been earnestly aimed at throughout.

The class of subjects here treated was suggested by the Bishop of Derry, and no apology can be necessary for having introduced it into a parish pulpit at a service usually attended by the merest sprinkling from the parochial congregation. The subjects themselves are of a kind that, if dealt with less elaborately, more briefly, and in a more popular style, need not be wholly excluded from the ordinary round of any pulpit ministrations; and as education makes progress, it will become increasingly requisite that they should find a place there. A reading people will want guidance as to the books they shall choose as devotional or didactic manuals, not to say that those which they are most likely to fall in with or to select for themselves will generally require to have their best use indicated and directed, and their possible misleading obviated. Much as the Christian community is indebted to such writings

as are discussed in the following pages, there are few, if any, of them which are altogether free from objection of some kind, and to some of the most popular of the class may be attributed errors by which schism has been aggravated, unsoundness in the faith fomented, and fanaticism inflamed. Wherever such mischief threatens, the pulpit cannot properly ignore it; while it is clearly bound to lend its aid to those who look for counsel in the choice of such important helps to piety as are to be found in godly books which will bear to be read again and again.

Books of this description have an especial value, and should be commended to use with especial urgency in an age like our own. The provocations to mental restlessness and the temptations to mental distraction—let it rather be called “dissipation”—in the midst of which we breathe and move, have a strong tendency to incapacitate for the concentration and continuity of serious thought, which are so essential both to a firm grasp of revealed truth, and to depth of spiritual affection, and steadfastness of holy living. It must be obvious that retirement and meditation are not of themselves sufficient to counteract these pernicious influences. Thoughts and interests which have largely engrossed the mind can be effectively displaced only by giving admission to others which can engage it as fully and strongly as they did; and meditation will continually lose its thread and wander back into its beaten paths if not kept within the desired bounds by restraints or

attractions outside and independent of the mind itself. Reading well chosen exercises such control, and exercises it with the more salutary effect in proportion as it presents to the mind less of any novelty but what is inherent in pregnant thoughts—thoughts that from the same germs continually strike deeper and deeper, expand and develop as they are contemplated into new forms and combinations, and hold the attention arrested as upon the same spot, within the circle of the same associations, and breathing still the same intellectual, moral, or spiritual atmosphere. It is not only that the devout life being primarily and principally subjective more readily assimilates a pabulum which contains a large infusion of the subjective element, but that there is a nutritive virtue in the single dish of wholesome food not to be extracted from the variety by which an unhealthy appetite needs to be stimulated or gratified. It is a remark of M. Michelet's ('The People,' p. 75) that "a single book, read through and through, ruminated on and pondered over, is often more fruitful than a vast mass of undigested reading." "I lived for whole years" (he says) "on a Virgil, and found myself well off. An odd volume of Racine, purchased by chance at a stall on the quay, created the poet of Toulon."

Akin to these effects which a single good book can produce, in virtue of its being *one*, are those which arise out of its bringing into close and repeated intercourse with a single mind. To whatever extent it may be true that there is gain in the multiplication of coun-

sellors, it is not true, but the reverse, in regard to the nurture, training, and practice of the devout life. The individual soul will gain more from consulting a single good spiritual guide, even one who may not always and in all respects command implicit deference, than by culling only their choicest principles, maxims, or examples, from a variety of persons with none of whom it holds sufficient converse to catch from them the spirit which gives birth to and informs their sayings or their acts.

The practical recognition of this principle may be seen in the Holy Scriptures themselves. Not to mention the manner in which the name of Moses is used in the New Testament to give authority to the Old, of the two great divisions of the Bible, that which belongs to the distinctively spiritual or subjective dispensation conveys to us the mind of God in connection more or less intimate with a single individual. Measuring from the record of St. Paul's conversion, in the ninth chapter of the Acts, to the end of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is, at any rate, deeply imbued with the Pauline spirit, more than a third of the New Testament may be said to employ, directly or remotely, one person as the chief medium for such divine communications as are made through the written Word: and if we were asked to specify what portion of the New Testament is the most calculated to minister to the subjectivity of the devout life, and has been found by experience to do so, we should certainly point to

the Epistles of St. Paul, which, excluding the Epistle to the Hebrews, constitute one-fourth of the whole of that sacred volume. Earnestly too as the Apostle deprecates, for himself as well as for others, the character of a party leader, he does not hesitate again and again to commend himself as a guide of spiritual thought, as well as an exemplar of religious practice. Indeed, may we not say of the teaching of Christ Himself that it has always the more power to influence the individual soul in proportion as it is received, not as if it were a collection of oracular utterances, vaguely traceable to God in their origin, and reaching us through we know not how many different human or earthly media, but as one individual whole, proceeding from the one heart and the one mind of the One Incarnate Lord, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Even where unity of authorship is doubtful or does not really exist, the mere supposition or imagination of it seems to exercise a potent influence in commending spiritual writings to the pious soul. How much of the edification and comfort which have for ages been derived from the Psalms is due to their being popularly received as "the Psalms of David." It may be doubted whether the '*De Imitatione*' would have enjoyed all its popularity if it had been received by the Christian world as a mere fasciculus of pious thoughts, precepts, and aspirations, gathered by some one or other from various sources, instead of as the original work of a particular (but very doubtful) author—Thomas à

Kempis, of whose history and character not one reader in a thousand knows anything whatever. And to take an example from profane literature, what should we not lose of the spell with which the very name of the Iliad binds us if we habitually contemplated it with critical eyes, as a gradual accretion of anonymous rhapsodies, instead of fondly regarding it as the offspring of the single mind of

“The blind old bard of Chios’ rocky isle”?

The remarks of the Dean of Norwich in the opening of his discourse render it needless to reconcile the foregoing recommendations of uninspired works with the paramount claims of the Bible itself. As substitutes for the pure and simple Word, such works will never adequately support a really devout life. It is only as supplementary to the Scriptures that the value here estimated is claimed for them. We must drink the healing and invigorating water fresh and fresh from the sacred source, and then seek the best aids, these among the chief, in applying the principles, giving direction to the feelings, and employing the capacities and the energies which owe their derivation to that fount alone.

A few words must be added with reference to an omission from this series which has been much noticed—that of ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress.’ The only explanation that can be given is, that it was necessary to limit the number of the subjects, and several of the

best, 'The Pilgrim's Progress' amongst them, had to be reserved for a future time. The following list, which might be considerably extended, will suffice to show that John Bunyan has been excluded, or, it is hoped, only postponed, in good company—Andrewes' 'Devotions,' 'The Christian Year,' Fénelon's 'Œuvres Spirituelles,' the 'Religio Medici,' Beveridge's 'Private Thoughts,' Wilson's 'Sacra Privata,' Ken's 'Practice of Divine Love,' the 'Theologia Germanica,' &c. &c. If the reception of the present volume should encourage the attempt, a selection from the above may hereafter supply it with a successor.

J. E. K.

St. James's Rectory,

September 20, 1875.

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LECTURE I.
THE 'DE IMITATIONE CHRISTI.'

PAR

CONTENTS OF LECTURE I.

The permanent popularity of any book is a proof of its value — Unparalleled popularity and diffusion of the 'De Imitatione Christi'—Number of editions—Equally acceptable to readers of all countries and times—Secret of this popularity.

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2. The claims of two writers only possess any intrinsic probability.
3. Quiet life of Thomas à Kempis.
4. Troubled career of Jean Gerson —Peacefulness and humility of his closing years —Terrible times in which he lived.
5. His probable share in the 'Internal Consolation' — Differences between the several books of the 'Imitatio'—It expresses the wisdom of many minds and ages — St. Benedict — St. Francis of Assisi — St. Bernard —

St. Bonaventura — St. Thomas of Aquinum — Other mystics — Remark of St. Francis de Sales.

6. It is "the Gospel of Monasticism"—Great services rendered by the monasteries—The high ideal which they helped to keep alive.
7. The 'Imitatio' abounds in deep sayings.
8. Two of its main characteristics: (1) Its unsacerdotal spirit — Evils of sacerdotalism — (2) Its protest against luxurious ease.
9. Two main defects of the 'Imitatio': (i.) Its tone of despairing sadness — (ii.) Its entire self-absorption.
10. Christianity is wiser and deeper than its best interpreters — Christ only has the words of Eternal Life.

THE ‘DE IMITATIONE CHRISTI.’

“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life.”—
JOHN vi. 6.

No book can achieve a permanent and universal popularity, unless, to an unusual degree, it meets the wants, and stirs the feelings, of the human heart. Accidents of time or circumstance may indeed cause a particular treatise to be widely read, and even to produce a deep impression, for a decade or a generation; but when we find a work valued in all countries—when it is equally popular in every language—when its original influence survives the great secular changes which alter the dynasties, the philosophies, nay even the religions of mankind—it must then be either the expression of the loftiest individual genius, or into it, as into some sacred goblet, must have been crushed the rich clusters of the wisdom of centuries. Such books are few in number, and they have for the most part been written in immortal verse. Among the works dedicated to religion and morality which have had this high destiny, the majority have been so enshrined in the reverence of men, that—like the Vedas, the Zend Avesta, and the Koran—they have been exempted from ordinary criticism as sacred and

inspired ; but among books confessedly human, the ‘*De Imitatione Christi*,’ which we to-day consider, stands, for diffusion and popularity, alone and unparalleled. Nearest to it is the ‘*Pilgrim’s Progress* ;’ but the ‘*Pilgrim’s Progress*’ owes no little of the spell which it has exercised to the potent interest of its allegory, and yet, even with this aid, it has never attained to the same astonishing pre-eminence. That a book purely devotional—a book which gains no hold by its eloquence, and derives no interest from illustration—a book which has no deep mysteries to reveal, no splendid theories to propound, no elaborate conclusions to demonstrate—should have won for itself a supremacy so unquestioned, a gratitude so ardent, is but a fresh confirmation of what the great Greek thinker said, that much learning teacheth not, but “the Voice of the Sibyl”—that is, the voice of sacred enlightenment—“uttering things simple, and unperfumed, and unadorned, reaches through unnumbered years by the aid of God.”* If the value of a book can in any way be gauged by the hold it wins upon the attention of myriads, then the value of the ‘*Imitatio*’ must be indeed immense. It has been in men’s hands for at least four hundred and fifty years; its editions in various ages and in various languages are to be counted by thousands; it has been a favourite with readers of every rank; and though it was written by one of different nationality, of different life, of different religion from our own—though the writer had been cramped for years by the narrowness of the Monastery, and trained from childhood in the aridities of the School—though the disputes which enthralled his day are dead, and the systems which moulded his destiny have passed away—though, since he was laid in his unknown grave, Empires have risen and fallen, and Churches flourished and decayed—yet here, in England, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is probable that

* Herakleitos.

there are very few in this congregation who are not perfectly familiar with those "brief, quivering sentences," which make us feel while we read them as though we had laid our hand upon the heart—throbbing with sorrows like our own—which beat so many centuries ago in the old mystic's breast. Some of us may recall how our greatest living writer of fiction describes the emotions of her heroine, when first, on finding the little volume, a Voice from the far-off Middle Ages communicates to her a soul's experience and belief. And the author adds, that the reason why, to this day, the small old-fashioned volume works miracles, turning bitter waters into sweetness, is "because it was written by a hand that waited for the heart's prompting;—because it is the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish, struggle, trust, and triumph, not written on velvet cushions, to teach endurance to those who are treading with bleeding feet upon the stones. And it remains to all time the lasting record of human needs and human consolations, the voice of a brother, who, ages ago, felt and suffered and renounced—in the cloister perhaps, with serge gown and tonsured head, with much chanting, and long fasts, and with a fashion of speech different from ours—but under the same silent far-off heavens, and with the same passionate desires, the same strivings, the same failures, the same weariness."*

1. The writer of the 'Imitatio Christi' is not known, and perhaps never will be known, with absolute certainty. The dispute about the authorship has filled a hundred volumes, and is still so undecided that the voice of the sweetest and humblest of books has come to us mingled, for the last two and a half centuries, with one of the most bitter and arrogant of literary controversies. The Benedictines, the Congregation of St. Maur, the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, the Congregation of the Index, the French Academy, the Parliament of

* George Eliot, 'Mill on the Floss,' ii. 187.

Paris,*—Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, England,—have all taken part in the interminable discussion. But what the writer himself said was, "Search not who spoke this and that, but attend to what is spoken,"† and "*ama nesciri*,"‡ love to be unknown. Yet the desire to discover whose is the voice to which we are listening, rises above a mere vain curiosity, because it would be instructive to learn what was the life and what the conditions from which have flowed utterances so sweet and pure. And though the question cannot be considered as settled, it is settled within certain limits. Of the nine or ten saints and doctors to whom at different times the work has been attributed, the pretensions of three alone can be now said to possess the least germ of probability. These three are a certain Gersen de Cabanis, Thomas Hemerken of Kempen, and Jean le Charlier de Gerson; and the claims of the first of the three,—a supposed Benedictine Abbot of Vercelli, in Italy, who is said to have lived in the earlier years of the thirteenth century, but whose very existence is problematical, and of whom at any rate we know nothing whatever beyond the syllables of his name,—those claims, founded on dubious manuscripts, confused orthography, and misread dates, may now be considered to be set at rest.§

2. The two, then, between whom rests the glory of the authorship—though in truth earthly glory was the last thing for

* Malou, 'Recherches sur le véritable Auteur de l'Im. de Jës.-Christ,' p. xi.

† 'Imit.' i. 5. "Non quaeras, quis hoc dixerit, sed quid dicatur, attende."

‡ 'Imit.' i. 2. "Si vis aliquid utiliter scire et discere, ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari." The phrase was, however, a commonplace of the mystics, and occurs in St. Bernard, 'De Nativ. Domini,' iii. "Tu ergo qui Christum sequeris, inventum absconde thesaurum; *ama nesciri*."

§ The arguments of Renan (in his

'Études religieuses') for the Abbot of Vercelli are utterly fantastic. The claims of the Avogadri MS. are now generally abandoned, and its date is probably 1549, not 1349. As against Gerson, Renan's arguments are extremely superficial, and are founded, apparently, on a total ignorance of Gerson's devotional and non-polemic writings, e.g. the 'De Monte Contemplationis,' 'De Paupertate Spirituali,' 'De Parvulis ad Christum trahendis,' &c.

which the author would have wished *—are *Thomas à Kempis*, subprior of the Monastery of St. Agnes, in the diocese of Cologne, and *Jean Gerson*, Chancellor of the University of Paris, and one of the grandest figures of his time.

3. The lives of both these Saints of God fell in the same dreary epoch. It was that “age of lead and iron,” of political anarchy and ecclesiastical degradation, of war, famine, misery, agitation, corruption, which marked the close of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century. Thomas à Kempis, born in 1379, died at the age of ninety-two; Gerson, born in 1363, died at the age of sixty-one. They were thus contemporaries for forty-five years of their lives. But the destinies of the two men were utterly different. Thomas, the son of an artisan, a quiet recluse, a copier of manuscripts, was trained at Deventer, and was received into a monastery in the year 1400 at the age of twenty-one. In that monastery of St. Agnes—“valde devotus, libenter solus, nunquam otiosus,” †—he spent seventy-one years of perfect calm, unbroken except by one brief period, in which he fled from his cell rather than acknowledge an archbishop to whom the Pope had refused the pallium.‡ This was almost the sole event of a life in which we are told that it was his chief delight to be alone *in angello cum libello*.§ “He bore,” says a brief biography of him, “great penury, labours, trials; he composed various short treatises for the edification of youth, in a style plain and simple, yet lofty and effective; and further, he was for many years a lover of the Lord’s Passion, and marvellously apt at consoling those who were in temptation or adversity.”||

* ‘Imit.’ i. 1. “Vanitas est honores ambire, et in altum te extollere.”

† From a contemporary MS. notice of him first edited by Mgr. Malou (‘Rech.’ p. 388). ‡ 1429–1432.

§ On a picture of him at Zwoll, is the inscription “In omnibus requiem

quaesivi nec inveni nisi in angello cum libello.”

|| Quoted in ‘Biogr. Univ.’ xxvii. 546. A number of very strong arguments in favour of Thomas à Kempis have been adduced by Mgr. Malou, Évêque de Bruges, in his ‘Rech. hist.

4. Far different from this life "in a little corner with a little book," was the troubled, prominent, impassioned life of *Jean Gerson*, the *Doctor Christianissimus*. Rising while yet young to a leading position, he was appointed Chancellor of the University of Paris before the age of thirty, and, struggling against popes, and councils, and mobs, and kings, became the stormiest champion of a stormy time. His life rang with combats and contradictions. Living in the perilous days of Azincour and of the Great Schism,—in the days when a maniac* was king of France, and a monster was Pope at Rome,† and when a nation, paralysed at once by foreign invasion and domestic misery, was equally impotent to restrain the furious excesses of the nobles under the Duke of Orleans, or of the butchers under the Duke of Burgundy,—we find him in politics, now a Burgundian thundering into the ears of the princes the terrible maxim, "Nulla gravior Deo victima quam tyrannus,"‡ now an Armagnac pronouncing the funeral oration over the murdered Orleans, refusing to pay taxes to the Cabochiens, and hiding himself from their fury in the vaults of Notre Dame. In Church policy we see him, now denouncing in burning language the autocracy of popes, and now accepting the humblest orders of monastic obedience. In religious controversy he is at once the burner of Huss and the model of Savonarola,—at one time urging what he calls the cruel mercy of putting to death the Wickliffe of Bohemia,§ and at another

et Crit. sur le vérit. Auteur de l'Imit.' (3rd ed., Paris, 1858). They prove decisively that *very early copies* of the book were made by à Kempis, and make out a strong, but not to my mind absolutely decisive, case in favour of his *authorship*. Prof. Karl Hirsche, in his 'Prolegomena zu einer neuen Ausgabe der Im. Christi,' says that a Brussels MS. is shown to be the author's autograph copy by a peculiar rhythmical punctuation, found also in the known

works of à Kempis, but which has escaped the notice of the editors.

* Charles VI. of France.

† John XXIII.

‡ 'Considerat. cont. adulator.' Opp. iv. 624. Michelet, 'Hist. de France,' iv. 53.

§ Gerson, 'Ep. ad Archiep. Prag.' 27th May 1414. Bulæus, V. 270, quoted by Michelet, 'Hist. de France,' iv. 382.

using language which leads to his denunciation by Romish bishops as a precursor of the Reformation.* And, when all his life seemed to have culminated in one long failure; when the University, whose authority he had so splendidly supported, was humiliated and crushed; when he is forced to hide under a disguise and wander away from the land to which he dared not return; when he found that the martyrdom of Huss had rather stimulated than checked the spirit of inquiry;—when he had wholly failed to elevate the tone of a sordid episcopate, or bring about the reform of a corrupted priesthood;—when he had even been unable to procure from the assembled Fathers of Constance, to whose influence he had so largely contributed, any decisive condemnation of the abhorrent doctrine of political assassination;—forced then to see how utterly little is man even at his greatest, and how different are the ways of man's nothing-perfectness from those of God's all-completeness, the great Chancellor, who has been the soul of mighty councils,† and the terror of contumacious popes, takes obscure refuge, first in a monastery of Tyrol,‡ afterwards under the rule of his brother at Lyons, and there, among the strict and humble Celestine monks, passes his last days in humility and submission. Far other thoughts than those of his tumultuous life had been revealed to him as he wandered, in danger and privation,

* Those who accept the new dogma of Infallibility naturally dislike the man who wrote 'De Auferibilitate Papae.' Bishop Malou quotes, with approval, the strong condemnation of Gerson by Cardinal Bellarmine, Nardi, &c. The latter calls him "a man fatal to the Church of God, and the ultimate cause of Lutheranism, Jansenism, and the French Revolution" (Malou, p. 329-334). Cardinal Pallavicini says that Luther borrowed his views to attack the Holy See. Obviously, the non-sacerdotal, non-Romanist character of

the 'Imitatio' tells much more in favour of Gerson's authorship than for the claim of à Kempis.

† The members of the Council of Constance wept when they heard the news of his death. 'Act. Conc. Const.' (Quoted by Malou, p. 329.)

‡ It is remarkable that no less than ten MSS. which attribute the work to Gerson have been found in the Austrian Abbey of Moelek, in which he took refuge after the Council of Constance.

among the mountains of Bavaria,—or, rather, those earlier objects had faded from the horizon of his soul like the burning hues of a stormy sunset; but as, when the sunset crimson has faded, we see the light of the eternal stars, so when the painted vapours of earthly ambition had lost their colouring, Gerson could gaze at last on those “living sapphires” which glow in the deep firmament of spiritual hopes. He had been a leader among the schoolmen, now he cares only for the simplest truths. He had been a fierce gladiator in the arena of publicity, now he has passed into the life of holy silence. At his hottest period of strife he had cried out, “Peace, peace, I long for peace;” * now at last there has fallen on his soul—not as the world giveth—that peace that passeth understanding. He who had taken his equal place among princes and cardinals, now seeks only the society of little children; and teaching them, and taught by them, and asking no reward but their innocent prayers, he leads them with him to the altar, that there they may lift their little white hands to heaven and follow him in the prayer he teaches them, “Oh, my God! oh, my Creator! have pity on thy poor servant, Jean Gerson.” And thus, gathering the little ones around his dying bed that he may breathe his last amid their purity and peace, died the grandest orator and politician of his day; and because even in his worst errors his ends had been unselfish, and even during his most flagrant contradictions his soul had been sincere, they engraved upon his tomb—happy, it has well been said,† is he who is worthy of such an epitaph—the two words, *Sursum Corda*—“Lift up your hearts!”

It is pleasant to know that there was such an ending to such a life;—that one who had drunk of the turbid waters of dispute learnt at last the sweetness of renunciation and obedience;—

* “Pax, pax fiat; pacem volo, pacem super omnia concupisco.” Sermon at Tarrascon.

† Michelet, ‘Hist. de France,’ iv. 382.

that one who had taken his share in the fierce and profitless logomachies of Nominalists and Realists could quietly say at last, "What matters it to us about genera and species?"*—that one who had felt the utter vanity of human wishes, found at last an Elim in the wilderness, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And whether Gerson actually wrote the 'Imitatio' or not, it seems to me that in many a sentence of it I catch the faint echo of accents which once rang with passion though now they are curbed into humility—the hollow and far-drawn murmurs that follow the detumescence of a storm. There is a certain fascination about the supposition that, at a time when the chief literature consisted of corrupt fabliaux and despicable farce—in that wretched epoch of the Great Schism and the Avignon Papacy—when a great preacher let fall on his trembling auditors the fearful doubt that perhaps, since the Schism began, no single soul had been saved—it is pleasant to think that at such a moment of despair and desolation, of perplexity and terror, amid the ruin of all his objects and the disenchantment of all his hopes, such a man as Gerson should have shown to weary souls the path of peace, and—greater in his downfall than in his splendour—should, from the silence of his monastery, have uttered the quiet voice which has led so many sinners to the feet of God.

5. And in one form at any rate in which the 'Imitatio' has been most popular, namely 'The Book of Internal Consolation'—a French version of the 'Imitatio,' less ascetic in tone and more adapted to the simple and the ignorant—it is far from improbable that Gerson had a share.† Of the entire book, however,

* 'Imit.' I. iii. 2. "Et quid nobis de generibus et speciebus?" This exactly resembles an expression of Gerson, 'Contr. van. curiositatem.' Opp. i. 11.

† See the arguments adduced very temperately in the edition of 'Le Livre

de l'interne Consolation,' by MM. Moland et Ch. d'Héricault, Introd. lxx-cii. The unction, the sadness, the emotional outbursts, of 'L'interne Consolation' bear a close resemblance to the known writings of Gerson, and the

as it now stands, neither he nor any man can be regarded as the exclusive author. No one, I think, can have read it, consecutively and attentively, without having been struck by the differences between the several books. The eloquent and exalted passion of the third book differs wholly from the resigned and humble simplicity of the first, and both from the subtle mysticism of the fourth. The first is perhaps the best and sweetest, and it recalls to mind the deepest peacefulness of holy retirement, the scenery of Perugino, the calm sweet faces of the early Benedictine monks;* but the whole book has been compared to a monastic garden, flourishing under the dew of heaven, and filled with "the lilies of a purity whiter than snow, the roses of divine love, the blue cyanias of heavenly meditation, the dark violets of nightly prayer."† Moods indeed differ at different times, but in point of fact no one person wrote, or perhaps could have written, this book exactly as it stands. It is the legacy of ages; it is the gospel of monasticism; it is the psalter of the solitary; it is the cyclic utterance of the mystic; it is the epic poem of the inward life. It is all involved in the Rule of St. Benedict with its glorification of humility, labour, and obedience,‡ and in that story of how, one evening, the saint stood in the window of Monte Cassino, and saw the whole world beneath him bathed in glory and sunshine, and *inspexit et despexit*—gazed on, and looked down upon it all. It is in the voluntary pauperism, the rapt asceticism, the radiant happiness of St. Francis of Assisi. It is in St.

scope of the book is in exact accordance with his desire to extend and popularise the mystic wisdom of love which he placed so far above earthly knowledge. "Et à ce peuvent simples gens venir en laissant les cures du monde et en gardant leur cœur pur et net." M. Gence (*d.* 1840) may be said to have devoted the labours of his whole life to prove that Gerson

wrote the 'Imitatio.' Among other works he published, 'Parallèle des Phrases de l'Im. de J.-C. et des passages tirés des œuvres morales de Gerson,' 1836. See, too, Vert's 'Gersoniana.'

* Renan, *ubi supra*.

† Mooren, 'Nachr. über T. à Kempis,' p. 178.

‡ De Gregory, 'Hist. de l'Imit.' i. 53.

Bernard's 'Commentary on the Song of Songs,' and in the story of how, while yet a boy, he plunged and stood neck-deep in the icy stream to subdue rebellious thoughts. It is in the 'Stimulus Amoris' of St. Bonaventura, and in the stories of how, when they brought him the offer of a cardinal's hat, they found him washing the meanest vessels of his monastery, and how when he was asked the source of his astonishing knowledge, he pointed in silence to his crucifix. It is in the sermons of St. Thomas of Aquinum, and in his lofty prayer, "Give me, O Lord, a noble heart which no earthly affection can drag down!" It is in the writings of the Brothers of Windesem;—in the sermons of John Tauler;—in the 'De Vanitate Mundi' of Hugo de St^o Victore;—in the 'De Spiritu et Animâ' of Isaac de l'Étoile;—in the 'Arbor Crucifixi Jesu' of Ubertino de Casal. The thoughts and expressions of all these may be found in the 'Imitatio,' as in many other devotional and mystic books of the Middle Ages, and in the undisputed writings of Gerson and of à Kempis.* Whoever was the compiler of the book did but gather into one rich casket the religious yearnings, the interior consolations, the wisdom of solitary experience, which had been wrung from many ages of Christian life. In this sense the bold saying of St. François de Sales is true, that the book has no other author than the Holy Spirit of God.

6. And therefore, since it is the clearest expression of an eternal yearning of the soul, its profound self-questionings, its unshrinking introspection, its pathetic familiarity with its

* On the tone of all these writings, see Schmidt, 'Essai sur les Mystiques du XIV^e Siècle,' and Hauréau, 'Hist. de la Phil. scolastique,' i. ch. xx. ii. p. 489 seqq. The Augsburg MSS. bear the title '*Compilator hujus opusculi fuit quidam frater Thomas.*' Jean Marie Suarez (who has found several fol-

lowers), in the preface to his edition of 1667, attributed the first book to Gerson; the second to Ubertino de Casal; the third to Petr. de Corbario (the anti-Pope Nicholas V. 1333); the fourth to Gerson; and the combination of them to Thomas à Kempis. See Gregory, 'Hist. de l'Imit.' 157.

Creator—the book cannot die. Good men may be—they often have been—utterly mistaken in their most cherished theology, and in their most impassioned convictions, but good men never live in vain, because their spiritual achievements are more sacred than their doctrines, and their lives more valuable than their beliefs. And systems, too, founded on erroneous prejudices, may grow corrupt and injurious,

“And God fulfil Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world;”

but if they be based upon sincerity, they cannot fail to leave to mankind a legacy of truth and wisdom. Hence, though many of the conceptions in which it was rooted have decayed, this book will continue to be valued so long as there be hearts that suffer, and that, in suffering, desire to rise heavenward on the two wings of simplicity and purity.* And though monasticism has passed away, yet to speak of it with contempt and hatred involves at once historical shallowness and ignorant ingratitude. In the brutality of anarchic centuries, the monasteries offered to the loving and the gentle their only peaceful home, and even to those whom penitence had at last melted, after lives passed in the orgies of debauchery or the furies of conflict, they provided on this side of the grave a dewy twilight “to close the oppressive splendour of their day.” Of their high services to learning, to literature, to art; of the manuscripts they preserved; of the schools they founded; of the hospitals they established; of the cathedrals they built; of the poverty they relieved; of the lands they tilled; of the oppressed interests which they protected; of the long roll of names splendid in the annals of humanity which they produced, I need not speak;† but they

* ‘Imit.’ ii. 4. “Duabus alis homo sublevatur a terrenis, simplicitate scilicet et puritate.”

† “He who is ignorant of these

services, or who despises them, has only a narrow and vulgar idea of virtue, and stupidly believes that he has fulfilled all his obligations towards

performed in reality services far loftier than these. For one cannot look on those calm passionless features—at once so grave, so lofty, and so tender—which stand out from the canvas of the early painters, without feeling the extent to which they kept alive the form and colour of “a beauty beyond that of earth, of a divine sympathy for suffering humanity, of a might beyond that of spear or shield.”* Let us not forget that in those rough and ignorant ages, the ideal of a monk was far more tenable than it would be now, and that for any one familiar with the history of those times it is not difficult to understand the fervent exclamation of St. Bernard: “It is *good* for us to be here; for here a man lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more swiftly, walks more carefully, rests more safely, dies more happily, is cleansed more speedily, is rewarded more abundantly.”† We might, indeed, apply to the author of the ‘*Imitatio*’ as to the best of the monks, however humble, the lines which the poet applies only to the dead,—

“He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
 Envy, and calumny, and hate, and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again;
 From the contagion of the world’s slow stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn,
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain,
 Nor, when the spirit’s self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.”‡

God by some habitual practices accomplished with that coldness which excludes zeal and love.”—Leibnitz. (See the fine Introduction to Montalembert’s ‘*Monks of the West*,’ E. tr. pp. 11, 12.) See too Mrs. Jameson’s ‘*Art Legends of the Monastic Orders*,’ p. xx.

* “Tout ce qui a contribué à maintenir dans l’humanité une tradition de noblesse morale est digne de respect, et en un sens, de regrets, lors même

que ce résultat a dû être acheté par beaucoup d’abus et de préjugés.”—Renan, ‘*Ét. Rel.*’ p. 336.

† “*Cella continuata dulcescit*,” says the author of the ‘*Imitatio*,’ i. 20, and who can doubt the perfect sincerity of conviction expressed in the two lines carved over the door of the Monastery of St. Victor?—

“*Clastrum nolenti mors est, sed vita volenti
 Per claustrum sedem, caeli mercaberis Eden.*”

‡ Shelley, ‘*Adonais*.’

Imperfect as may have been his theory of duty, he failed not to win the high grace of heavenly wisdom, which, though he lived in the fifteenth century, may be of special value to the nineteenth; and though he were a Romanist and a monk, he has uttered eternal truths, which may be infinitely precious to the Protestant and the man of the world.

7. It is so of course with the isolated experiences which he has to offer. We are not indeed called to be monks; we need not, in those beautiful and now proverbial lines of the 'Christian Year'—

"We need not bid for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky;"

and yet it remains true that "Solitude is the audience-chamber of God."* In an age when, as a poet of our own has told us,—

"We chatter, nod, and hurry by,
And never once possess our souls
Before we die,"†

may we not all learn something about the way to preserve the bloom and dignity of the spiritual life, from the quiet voice which bids us "beware of much talk, remain in solitude, and enjoy thy God?"‡ And is there no deep knowledge of the human heart in such a sentence as "More speedily is the outward enemy overcome if the inward man be not laid waste"§? and no spiritual insight in such a sketch as this of the growth of temptation, "First there cometh to the mind a bare thought, then a strong imagination of evil, then a delight thereof, and an evil motion, and then consent;|| and so by little and little our wicked enemy getteth complete entrance,

* W. S. Landor.

† Matthew Arnold.

‡ 'Imit.' iv. 12.

§ Id. iii. 13.

|| Id. i. 13. "Prius occurrit menti simplex cogitatio, deinde fortis imaginatio, postea delectatio, et motus pravus et assensio."

whilst he is not resisted at the beginning"? How simple again, and how profound, are the chapters on thoroughly searching our own consciences, and on holy purposes of amendment! And how permanent is the value of that view which is the fundamental view of all mysticism, that God has revealed Himself in His *works* and in His *Son*, so that, both without man's soul and within, the natural and the supernatural co-exist eternally, and He hath not left Himself without witness to any living soul!

8. But though on every page of the 'Imitatio' the earnest and thoughtful Christian may thus find food for profit and for meditation, I can only single out two main and general respects in which, as it seems to me, the book may be to us and to our day pre-eminently useful; and two main and general respects, in which, on the other hand, we can only regard its teachings as questionable and one-sided.

(1) The first main value and glory of the book is the eternal protest which it silently bears against the notion which lies at the very basis of sacerdotalism. A Catholic, a priest, a monk, yet—as though raised far above himself and the system which he held, and the ecclesiastical order to which he belonged,—the one truth which he most absolutely realises is the *direct* and *immediate* access of the soul to God. In this way, long before the Reformation, the book must have done infinite good to perplexed and burdened souls, and may serve as a solemn warning to those over whom Rome is exercising her fascinations among ourselves. For it is the very worst error of Romanism, and the source of all its other errors of ambition and arrogance,—and it is one against the encroachments of which in our own Church we should watch most jealously,—that it intrudes into the sacredness of the soul's individuality, that it thrusts all kinds of intermediates between the soul and its Creator. God says, "I am thy Father and thy strong salvation;" Christ says, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden:" but it is but too natural for the soul, in its guilt, its feebleness, its faithlessness, to doubt the direct-

ness of the invitation ; to imagine that God is not sincere ; to strive to approach Him, not directly as a child its father, but—leaning as on broken reeds that pierce the hand—through priests, and rituals, and systems. But in this book there is no interference between the soul and God ; no vulgarising of the emotions by unbarring them to human eye ; no wearing of the soul upon the sleeve for daws to peck at ; no human foot intruding between us and the mercy-seat ; no dabbling of the profane hand of human confessor in the secrets of the microcosm. It is an audience-chamber where no ambassador is needed ; it is a confessional wherein the soul confesses to and absolves itself.* It sends the penitent neither to book nor formula, neither to Church nor Council, neither to Pope nor Priest, neither to Saint nor Angel ; but, Go, it says, and clasp thy very Saviour's feet. It teaches the soul not to hide itself among the garden-trees, but even in its guiltiness to listen to the voice of God ; it recognises the fundamental truth that “ *No man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him ; for it cost more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever.* ” †

(2) And besides this indirect, yet none the less solemn, protest against the usurpations of sacerdotalism, there is a warning, quite direct and no less necessary, against the dangers which beset an age of ease. In the reaction against the theory of asceticism, in the denunciation of unnecessary austerities, we have come, I know not how, to imagine that heaven may be gained “ in an easy chair,” and that crowns of victorious amaranth will be dropped quite naturally on dozing brows. It is not so. It never can be so. All Scripture is a protest against our thinking so. The body, it says, must be subdued ; the flesh mortified ; the passions crucified ; the cross taken ; the race run ; the battle fought. Every temptation, whether

* See some excellent remarks in Milman's ‘ *Latin Christianity*, ’ v. 556, *seq.*

† Psalm xlix. 7, 8.

gradual or sudden, must be watched against ; every impediment, whether slight or serious, must be thrown aside. We are naturally proud, naturally discontented, naturally selfish ; that higher nature which makes men humble, sweet, self-sacrificing, does not achieve the victory without a struggle. We are naturally prone to the indulgence which makes us the slaves of our lower impulses ; it is only by strenuous and long-continued effort that we can ever secure over ourselves a serene and tranquil mastery. Anything which teaches us the infinite value of each human soul, anything which opens our eyes to the awfulness of those spiritual perils which assault and hurt it, anything which brands upon our consciences the intense conviction that a *lax* view of sin is simply a *false* view of sin,—(and these are primary lessons of the ‘De Imitatione’)—teaches us a lesson useful to all times, transcendently needful to our own. Souls there may be, which, even from the midst of abundant ease and surrounding splendour, are still able to wing heavenward their steady flight ;—but to those who are wounded,—to those who have fallen,—to those who have sinned,—to those who have succumbed to the evil tyranny of habit,—to those, who, blinded by the god of this world, have dethroned the supremacy of conscience,—to such the victory becomes only possible under more strenuous conditions, and the fitting way for them is far rather the

than
“ Stone floor one may writhe on like a worm,”

“ The mossy pillow blue with violets.”

The method indeed may be different, but the working of it must be analogous, and the end the same. Now, as in the days of the ‘Imitatio,’ and in every age, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence ;—now, as then, and at all times, we must *strive* to enter in at the strait gate.*

* ‘Imit.’ iii. 53. “A notis et a curis oportet elongari, et ab omni temporalis solatio mentem tenere privatam.”

9. But if in these, as in many other respects, the book still continues to be so deeply valuable, yet it must be at the same time admitted that it is not perfect; that its teaching cannot be accepted without distinct reserves;—that it is pervaded by elements which, unless they be corrected and expanded by yet loftier and diviner teaching, make it—as regards some particulars—neither a safe nor a wholesome guide.*

(i.) One of these erroneous elements—one of the *idola theatri* which misled the holy and humble man of heart in his sincere search for truth—is the spirit of utter sadness. In its repudiation of every natural joy the ‘Imitatio’ breathes a sense of despair,† which we also find in the little golden book of the ‘Meditations’ of Marcus Aurelius, but which is less surprising and less blameworthy in a pagan emperor than in a Christian monk. I do not say that the soul of the writer was not blessed with that holy joy which is one of the fair fruits of the Spirit which bloom upon the Tree of Life; but this joy of spirit, because it involved a certain revolt and violence against that which is innocent in nature, is less bright, less trustful, less perfect than was within his reach. His joy is like those dim flowers—*flores tristes* Linnæus called them—which bloom only in the twilight; at best it is like

“An Alpine harebell, hung with tears,
By some cold morning glacier,”

not, as the joy of a Christian might be, a gentian glowing with vivid bloom amid the very snow. And this was because the unconscious dualism of the mediæval monks led them, like the ancient Stoics, to defy and reject, instead of using lawfully, the elements of happiness. God has been very good to us; He

* See Martin’s ‘Hist. de la France,’ v. 558-560; Milman’s ‘Lat. Christ.’ vi. 482-485. To the former book I have been much indebted.

† See ‘Imit.’ ii. 3, 12. iii. 42. The

22nd chapter of the first book is “De consideratione humane miserie,” in which occur such remarks as “vere miseria est vivere super terram.”

has placed us in a fair world; He has given us the delight in knowledge; He has given us the charm of art; He has given us the glorious beauty of inanimate nature; He has written His love for us in large letters on the stars of heaven, and in the flowers of spring. But of all this there is not one word in the 'Imitatio';—no accent of human tenderness; no gleam of holy friendship; no great voice of the mountain or the sea. The author must have resembled the melancholy saint, who, after riding all day along the shores of the Lake of Geneva, asked in the evening where it was. That life is miserable, that the world is hopeless, that society is incurable, that knowledge is worthless, that the intellect is a source of peril,*—this is the basis of his system, if not the burden of his song. It is as though for him the flames of some physical Gehenna had flung their lurid glare across the world, and left it without one fountain for our refreshment, without one flower of duty to bloom unscorched beside the path of life.†

(ii.) And perhaps this is sufficient to account for the worst defect of the 'Imitatio,' which is its marvellous self-absorption.‡ It is not of course the vulgar selfishness of personal indulgence, but it still is selfishness, though directed wholly to spiritual ends. The entire book is founded on the erroneous assumption that man's sole work in this world is to work out his own personal salvation—to secure, amid universal conflagration, his individual safety. He seems to have no other conception of sainthood save that of the cœnobite—no other ideal of perfection save that of the hermit of the wilderness. "Love to dwell alone with thyself;" "desire communion with none;" "remove thyself far away from acquaintances and dear friends;" "attend wholly unto God and thyself:"—this is his constant

* 'Imit.' i. 2, *et passim*; compare the "Abêtissez-vous" of Pascal.

† See 'Imit.' i. 24, iii. 12.

‡ 'Imit.' ii. 5: "Internus homo omnibus curis sui ipsius curam antepōnit."

admonition,* and it is not good or necessary or wise. "It is not good for man to be alone," says the first Book of the Bible with eternal truth. "We are framed for mutual help and comfort," says even Marcus Aurelius, and herein, strange to say, the 'Meditations' of the pagan are better, wiser, more Christ-like than the 'Imitatio Christi' of the Christian. For though the great and holy emperor had no such means of knowing as the author of the 'Imitatio' had, that Life is *Worship*, he had learnt—what the other had forgotten or ignored—that Life is not only *Worship* but also *Service*;—that Charity is better than to speak with the tongue of angels;—that there is a nobleness even in wishing oneself accursed to save others;—that to each of us, and to all, God intrusts the love and care of each and all;—that love to Him our Father is best shown by love to Man our brother;—that man has nobler things in life to work at, and to think of, than merely to save himself on some plank of prayer and self-denial out of the fiery surges of some devouring sea. The 'Imitatio,' from beginning to end, does not once catch a glimpse of that truth which has been so brilliantly illustrated in the Eastern legend narrated in the verses of our English poet—how Abou-ben-Adhem once saw a vision of an angel who was writing in a book of gold the names of those who loved their Lord:—

" 'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay! not so,'
 Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
 But cheerly still, and said, 'I pray thee then,
 Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.'
 The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
 He came again with a great wakening light,
 And shewed the names which love of God had blessed,
 And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

* 'Imit.' i. 8: "De cavendâ nimîâ familiaritate," i. 17-20, iv. 12; *et passim*. In iii. 53, occur such remarks as:

"Ama intus habitare tecum, nullius require confabulationem;" "totum mundum nihil aestima," &c.

One word more :—

10. To do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. If Gerson and à Kempis did not realise that it was the sublimest originality of the character of Christ to go about doing good, *we* know it to be so, and the opportunities of doing so are constantly granted to us. To press upon you such a duty in relation to the maintenance of schools, such as those for which your contributions are to-day requested, would be an insult to your intelligence. Leaving that work for your generous aid, let me add only in conclusion, the inspiring certainty, which the examination of this book has forced upon our notice, and which, though little illustrated, seems to me by no means one of the least forcible evidences for the truth of our religion—that Christianity is larger, wiser, purer, truer, deeper than the best words of its holiest interpreters;—that the Life of Christ unspeakably surpasses the fairest and sweetest lives of even His truest followers. The ‘Imitatio’ says, Annihilate the lower parts of thy nature; the voice of Christ bids us only control and ennoble them. The ‘Imitatio’ says, Abase thy reason; Christ says, Enlighten it. The ‘Imitatio’ teaches us to treat the body as an enemy; the Gospel of Christ bids us train it in sanctity and honour. The ‘Imitatio’ urges us to shun all human intercourse; the Gospel teaches us to be kindly among our kind. The ‘Imitatio’ bids us fly from the wicked world; the Gospel bids us be ready even to die to make it better. The ‘Imitatio’ aims at the salvation of the individual; Christ came to die for all the race.* Yes! if we would find the one true ideal—if we would seek the sole divine example—we must look to Christ and Christ alone. The brightest lustre of His brightest followers is but, at the best, like that dim earthshine reflected from our planet upon

* See M. Martin, *ubi supra*.

the unilluminated orb of its crescent satellite. But the light of Christ is the Light of the World, and is as the Sun goeth forth in his strength. In His light, and in that alone, shall we see light. The most eloquent of His servants does but interpret Him with imperfect utterance and a stammering tongue ;—but He is the very Word of God ; the greatest of His saints is but a man of like passions with ourselves,—but He is the Son of God, the Saviour of the World. And if, in an age when such multitudes are forsaking Him, His voice appeals to us in the old sad question, “Will ye also go away?” we, at least, with one voice will exclaim, with the whole conviction of our hearts and consciences, “Lord, to whom should we go? Thou—Thou only—Thou for ever—Thou hast the words of eternal life!”

LECTURE II.

THE 'PENSÉES' OF BLAISE PASCAL.

P.R.

CONTENTS OF LECTURE II.

Character of the 'Pensées': fragments of a designed Apology for Christianity. Pascal's experience: his personal conversion. The book reflects difficulties and conflicts; stern, truthful. Problems in human life caused by—

1. Certainty of the moral law and authority of Conscience;
2. The moral disorder of the world, the greatness and littleness of man and human life.

Greatness of the contradictions and evil: that which reconciles one and remedies the other must be as great. The Christian Remedy: the Incar-

nation and all its consequences. How looked upon by Pascal.

How such a book useful devotionally:—

1. To elevate and correct devotional habits and feelings. Necessity for healthy devotion of *ideas* and thought, as well as *feeling*.
2. To infuse real soberness and seriousness amid the exciting influences of highly developed civilization.
3. To impress the necessity of self-watchfulness and obedience as the absolute conditions of attaining to religious truth.

Conclusion.

THE 'PENSÉES' OF BLAISE PASCAL.

"Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice."—PSALM CXXX. 1.

THE Psalms, which are the records of the purest and loftiest joy of which the human soul is capable, its joy in God, are also the records of its dreariest and bitterest anguish, of the days when all seems dark between itself and God, of its doubts, of its despair. Their music ranges from the richest notes of triumphant rapture to the saddest minor key. The Psalms are the patterns and precursors of that mass of literature embodying the experience of the spiritual life which has grown up during the Christian centuries, and some examples of which are at this time proposed for our special notice. The Psalms contain the germs of it, and, like the Psalms, it varies widely in its scale and tone. It reflects the many sides, the countless moods, of the soul, in its passage through time, confronted with eternity and its overpowering possibilities. It tells of quietness and confidence, of strength and victory and peace. It tells, too, of the storm, of the struggle, of the dividing asunder of soul and spirit; of perplexities which can be relieved only by the certainties of death; of hope wrestling, indeed, undismayed, unwavering, but wrestling in the dark, and, when beheld for

the last time on this side the grave, still obstinate, but still unsolaced. Christian life may be upon the heights, and in the sunlight; the lines fall to it in pleasant places, and "the voices of joy and gladness are in its dwellings." But its lot may be also "in the deeps," where "all God's waves and storms have gone over it;" where the voices are those of "deep calling unto deep amid the roar of the waterspouts," voices of anxiety and distress, of "majestic pains," of mysterious sorrow.

Such in the main is the voice of that book on which I am to speak to you, the 'Thoughts,' as it is called, of Blaise Pascal. It is, as we know, a book of fragments found among Pascal's papers after his death, mainly relating to a projected apology for religion, and variously pieced together, according to the judgment of different editors. This is not the place to speak of its singular literary history, of the strange fortunes which have attended on it, of the fate which has given it so much interest for the soberest and deepest belief, and for the most mocking and the most critical unbelief, of France—for Arnauld and Vinet,* for Voltaire and Condorcet, for Sainte-Beuve. I shall say nothing of its apologetic value, as an argument in defence of Christianity, nor of its place in French literature; nor of what it did, with other writings of Pascal, in bringing religious questions from the technical treatment of the schools into contact with the ideas and language of common life, to be subjects of keen and serious interest to the educated and intelligent in all grades of society. Nor must I dwell on that exquisite purity of language which in itself makes it one of the most instructive of moral lessons. In no writer since the great Greek masterpieces has the "beauty, born" of simplicity and truthfulness, "passed" so profusely into style; a perpetual witness to all who hold a pen against the dishonesty of conventional

* I am glad to express my obligation to this admirable writer's 'Études sur Blaise Pascal.'

and affected words, warning them of the first duty of that exact agreement of word and meaning, of that sincerity of the writer with himself as well as with his readers, "*ce consentement de vous avec vous-même*," out of which, as a principle of composition, Pascal's excellence grew. My business with it is simply as a 'Companion for the Devout Life;' an office which it is not the less qualified to discharge that it makes no formal or direct pretension to do so; though it is not a book of devotion, nor a guide to the details of Christian life, nor a body of meditations or counsels, nor intentionally a record of the history of a religious mind. Nothing was farther from Pascal's thought than to venture on any such task; nothing would have shocked him more than the notion of painting himself. But in spite of himself he has done so. And if character is elevated and refined, and our loyalty to the unseen strengthened, by seeing how one of the keenest of human minds pierced into the truth of things, and one of the noblest of human souls thirsted after holiness, these Remains may profitably go with us into our chamber, when we are alone with ourselves and God. They belong to the last years of Pascal's short life, into which so much was crowded, years of sickness and untimely decay. They are the broken words of a suffering and dying man, to whom truth and reality, always precious, have become imperiously supreme; whose eye has become preternaturally clear in discerning the greatness of man's destiny and hope, the shows and shadows of his present state; and who has ceased to live for anything but God, for the endurance of God's will, and the imitation of His love, while here.

Pascal's 'Apology,' if it had been written, would have been, not a treatise of pure argument, or an analysis of the grounds of religious belief, but the passionate expostulation of profound conviction on the madness and unreason of indifference or loose thinking on a matter of such importance,

and such high claims, as Christianity. The religion of Pascal is the religion of a converted man—of a man, I mean, who at a definite time of his life had felt himself touched and overcome by the greatness and the reasonableness of things unseen, and had consciously turned to God; not from vice, but from bondage to the interests of time, from the fascination of a merely intellectual life, from the frivolity which forgets the other world in this. His eyes had been opened, and he had been brought “into the deeps;” “the deeps” far below the mere surface of custom and transient opinion; the deeps of truth about man’s condition and God’s greatness; the deeps of reality about moral good and moral evil, the relation of eternity to time. And he writes, “out of the deeps”—as one absorbed and awe-struck, and with every fibre strung, by his vivid consciousness of the strange contrasts, the inevitable alternatives, the mighty interests at stake, amid which man’s course is to be run. His view of religion rises out of these solemn and unfathomable depths, the abyss of life and pain and death, the abyss of sin and ignorance and error, the abyss of redemption and of God’s love. Even the mind of Pascal was not large enough for everything; these themes absorb and dominate his imagination and thoughts; and, steadied and consoled as he certainly was by his religion, and capable of the highest transports of Christian gladness, his book is not one of those which reflect the joy, the quiet order, the peace and exultation of Christian life.

The book is a stern one—stern with the severity of the awful vision of truth which had filled the writer’s mind, and before which he had trembled; and its effort is to be strongly, lucidly, plainly *true* about the real state of the case, true before the judgment of the common sense of men of the world. Pascal showed to the full that passion for simple, unaffected, solid reality, which was the characteristic of the early days of Port Royal, of that mighty but short-lived school, the greatest religious

birth of the French Church, before whose heroic and sublime singleness of mind, and thoroughness of purpose, and hatred of pretence and display, even the majesty of Bossuet, and the grace of Fénelon, and the sweetness and tenderness of St. François de Sales, and the grand erudition of the Benedictines, fall into a second place. Pascal looks upon the world in which he finds himself, and two things meet him. On the one hand, the certainty of the moral law, the certainty to conscience of its supremacy, the certainty of its excellence beyond comparison over everything else known to man; and on the other hand, the certain facts of man's actual condition and nature, the anomalies, the disorder, the contradictions, the discords of his present state, the blinding and oppressive mystery which hangs about all that we are, and what we are meant for. The old age of the world, after all its long experience, finds strengthening in it still the invincible consciousness that there is nothing greater, nothing surer, than right and duty, nothing more sacred than justice, nothing more beautiful than love. And yet this divine idea of duty and right, man's distinctive prerogative in nature, seems thrown for no purpose into a world which is for ever contradicting it; it is reflected only in broken distortion on the troubled surface of human society. Pascal had felt as keenly, perhaps, as man ever felt them, the triumphs of pure intellect, in its clearness, its versatility and its strength. He felt the immeasurable distance of mind and genius above all the greatness of outward and material things, above the pomp and glories of riches and power, above all physical perfection. Archimedes, he says, needed nothing of the grandeur of "kings and captains and great men according to the flesh;" he won no victories, he wore no crown; but he was great in his own great order of intellect: the mathematician's enthusiasm kindles at his name—"O how glorious was he to the intellectual eye"—"*O qu'il a éclaté aux esprits.*" But there is an order of greatness yet higher than that of intellect. "The interval, which is infinite,"

writes Pascal, "between body and mind, represents the infinitely more infinite distance between intellect and charity."* This superiority in kind of moral goodness is Pascal's fundamental axiom, and he, of all men, had a right to lay it down. The strong and nimble mind which played with difficulties, and to whose force all resistance yielded, the soaring imagination, the ambition of the explorer on the traces of unthought-of knowledge, all that made and marked the matchless intellect of his time, the great geometer, the great physicist, the great mechanist, master, too, of the keenest satire and the most unapproachable felicity of language—he and all that he is, bows down before the unearthly greatness of charity, all confesses the sovereign and paramount excellence of moral perfections, the supreme claims of the moral law of goodness.

And then, with this conviction as to the true law of man's nature, what does he see round him? He sees a world "out of joint," presenting the most contradictory appearances, distracted by the most opposite tendencies, with no remedy for its disorder, no key to its riddles. He pursues through all its forms the contrast between man's greatness and his littleness. Read man in one way, and he seems made for God and truth. Read him in another, and nothing can express the interval which separates him from all that is holy, perfect, eternal; his blind stumbling through an existence which has come from chance, the unmeaningness, the vanity of his life. How is it that he knows so much and can think so powerfully, and yet after all, knows so little and so imperfectly; why should his knowledge, just where it is most important, find an impassable

* "La distance infinie des corps aux esprits figure la distance infiniment plus infinie des esprits à la charité, car elle est surnaturelle."

"Tout l'éclat des grandeurs n'a point de lustre pour les gens qui sont dans les recherches de l'esprit. La

grandeur des gens d'esprit est invisible aux riches, aux rois, aux capitaines, à tous ces grands de chair. La grandeur de la sagesse, qui est nulle part sinon en Dieu, est invisible aux charnels et aux gens d'esprit. Ce sont trois ordres différents en genres."

barrier, and truth elude and betray him just where he most wants it? To look at his great endowments, his wonderful achievements, his never-ceasing progress, he seems indeed the crown and glory and perfection of God's creation. But look at him, again, in comparison with what his very powers enable him to see, the immensity, the inscrutableness of the universe, and he sinks into an insignificance which he has not the imagination to measure or the words to express. Lost in this little corner of creation, in this little breathing-time called life—lost between the infinities of space, the infinities of time before and after, the infinities of greatness, the infinities of littleness—lost “in the abyss of that boundless immensity of which he knows nothing,” in those “terrible spaces of the universe which encompass him;” * what can he think of himself? what can he think that he is worth?—“What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of man that thou visitest him?” Look at the things which he does *not* know, and his vaunts of knowledge seem childish. Look at the things which enchant him, the prejudices which enslave him, the basenesses to which he can descend, and is the contempt of the cynic undeserved for so poor a creature? Look at the inevitable fact of death, of the decay which precedes it, or else the untimeliness of its blow, and is it possible to exaggerate the idle fruitlessness of such a lot, except as a link in an eternal and unfeeling chain of fate? So aspiring, so defeated, so undiscouraged; with the strongest impulses to hope, but ever haunted by arguments of despair, he

* “En voyant l'aveuglement et la misère de l'homme, en regardant tout l'univers muet, et l'homme sans lumière, abandonné à lui-même, et comme égaré dans ce recoin de l'univers, sans savoir qui l'y a mis, ce qu'il y est venu faire, ce qu'il deviendra en mourant, incapable de toute connaissance, j'entre en effroi comme un homme qu'on aurait porté endormi dans une

île déserte et effroyable, et que s'éveillerait sans connaître où il est, et sans moyen d'en sortir.”

“Abîmé dans l'infinie immensité des espaces que j'ignore et que tu ignores.” . . .

“Je suis dans une ignorance terrible de toutes choses. . . . Je vois ces effroyables espaces de l'univers qui m'enferment.” . . .

reveals, by fits and starts, his greater and better nature, in the originality of grand deeds and lofty characters; but practically and in the long run, he leads a life which he might lead without God and conscience, guided by calculation of what is pleasant and prudent, calculating rightly in the main, often miscalculating, miserably and fatally. There he is, this marvelously compounded creature, strong even unto death, and yet unstable as water, crossing and contradicting himself through life; the slave of nature, which yet bows to the spell of his power; the slave of habits, yet their creator; the slave of imagination, of which yet he knows the illusions; the slave of opinions, for which he is yet responsible, and which he has contributed to accredit; seeking and finding, and seeking afresh; so ingenious, yet so stupid; so wise, and yet so incredibly foolish; able to do so right, yet constantly doing so wrong; balancing between good and evil, sin and repentance, till the wavering is cut short by death. And that, multiplied by the numbers of mankind, is the broad aspect of human life.

The mass of mankind look at all this under the sway of custom and habit, as a matter of course, familiar as the routine of every day; and they take it all as it comes, they feel no surprise; they acquiesce and are content. But when they try to look below the surface, then come the perplexities and the enigmas. Then come the baffling problems, and the contradictions which defy explanation. Our instruments of knowledge fail us, or play us false. We are born with the instinct and idea of certainty, and imply it in every act and argument; yet certainty flies from our analysis and our verifying tests. If we venture to search deeply, then come difficulties following difficulties, till reason is giddy. Truth is impossible without freedom of thought; yet no sooner is thought free than it eats away all certainty, historical, moral, religious, scientific, till at last it turns upon itself, and surrenders its own consciousness of existence and freedom a prey and sacrifice to a theory.

We are distracted between rival claims on our allegiance: * between nature and broad common sense and irresistible convictions, irresistible in spite of all objections, and "reasons of the heart superior to those of the intellect;" † and on the other hand, the keen, subtle, finished conclusions of the reasoning faculty, apparently so faultless and impregnable in form, often so formidable and ghastly in their consequences.

What account is to be given of all this? In a well-known passage, ‡ Pascal puts side by side the high and the low view of human life, apart from Christianity, in the persons of two eminent representatives respectively of those two views, Epictetus and Montaigne. One set of thinkers, like Epictetus, look only on the lofty side; they insist on man's greatness, and freedom and moral power; they see in his moral nature the proof of his kinship with the Divine, the image and likeness of God. Another set, like Montaigne, can only smile and doubt and mock at man's efforts after truth, at his pretensions to rise above the level of mortality; they catalogue his uncertainties, his mistakes, his failures; they paint vividly his weakness, his ignorance, his shame. Both are right, and both are wrong: right, in the truth which they assert, wrong as to the truth which they overlook; but both want the key which unlocks the puzzle, the central truth which reconciles the contradiction. Pascal will explain away nothing, will disguise and ignore nothing. He will put his standard and idea of life as high as Epictetus; but he sees, as clearly as Montaigne, the tricks that custom and imagination play, the treacheries of self-interest, the inconsistencies of goodness, the strange mixture in real life

* "Qui demêlera cet embrouillement? La nature confond les pyrrhoniens, et la raison confond les dogmatistes. . . . Humiliez-vous, raison impuissante: taisez-vous, nature imbécile; apprenez que l'homme passe infiniment l'homme, et entendez de

votre maître votre condition véritable, que vous ignorez. Écoutez Dieu."

† "Le cœur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connaît pas; on le sait en mille choses." "Est-ce par raison que vous aimez?"

‡ The conversation with De Sacy.

of the ridiculous and the pathetic, the gaps in our logic, the short-comings of our proofs; he employs the exaggerations of Montaigne for the purpose of startling men from the trance and spell of mere habit, to realize the strangeness of what is most familiar, the precariousness of much that they take for granted. What is the explanation of these anomalies of man's condition, of the perplexities of his life—anomalies and perplexities which to those who see them are certain and crushing? Why is it that, as has been said, "Life is such a comedy to those who think, such a tragedy to those who feel?"* Pascal can see but one explanation of it. Man's greatness is greatness fallen; it is royal greatness, but the greatness, as he expresses it, of a king dethroned, dispossessed, disinherited, banished.† A writer of our own time, as subtle and deep as Pascal, has, without thinking of Pascal, expressed Pascal's thought:—

"To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of men, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens, so faint and broken, of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things, as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hope-

* Quoted in Greg's 'Enigmas of Life,' p. 192.

† "La grandeur de l'homme est grande en ce qu'il se connaît misérable. Un arbre ne se connaît pas misérable.

... Toutes ces misères-là prouvent sa grandeur. Ce sont misères de grand seigneur, misères d'un roi dépossédé. ... Car qui se trouve malheureux de n'être pas roi, sinon un roi dépossédé."

less irreligion, that condition of the whole race, so fearfully yet so exactly described in the apostle's words, 'having no hope, and without God in the world,'—all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts on the mind a sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.

"What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer, that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from his presence. Did I see a boy of good make and mind, with the tokens upon him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birth-place or family connections, I should conclude that there was some mystery connected with his history, or that he was one of whom, from one cause or another, his parents were ashamed. Thus only should I be able to account for the contrast between the promise and the condition of his being. And so I argue about the world: *if* there be a God—*since* there is a God—the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator. This is a fact, a fact as true as the fact of its existence; and thus the doctrine of what is theologically called original sin becomes to me almost as certain as that the world exists, and as the existence of God."*

If there is a remedy for this tremendous dislocation, impossible as it must be to anticipate its nature, it must be one adequate to the greatness of the disaster.† And this disaster

* Newman, 'Apologia,' p. 377. Compare Pascal: "Le nœud de notre condition prend ses retours et ses replis dans cet abîme. De sorte que l'homme est plus inconcevable sans ce mystère, que ce mystère n'est inconcevable à l'homme."—Faugère, ii. 155.

See a passage in Vinet's 'Nouvelles Études évangéliques,' p. 51:—"Le nombre de nos misères, leur gravité, leur

perpétuel retour n'ont laissé de choix aux esprits méditatifs qu'entre deux suppositions terribles: ou le monde est disputé par un bon et un mauvais génie, ou il doit y avoir au fond de notre histoire un épouvantable mystère."

† "L'incarnation montre à l'homme la grandeur de sa misère, par la grandeur du remède qu'il a fallu."

is the fundamental supposition of that religion of which the Bible is the record, and the Christian Church the creation and witness. It rests on two great foundations; a great verity of history, experience, and consciousness, man's double nature, his heights and depths, his worth, and his worthlessness, the inexplicable fact of sin and all its consequences;—and a great disclosure which none could make but God, that man's delivery and restoration are dear to his Maker, that for man's sake the Highest was joined to the lowest, Divine Power and Love to earthly degradation and pain; the Cross of Christ was the Passion and Sacrifice of the Son of God. Christianity satisfies the conditions which it ought to satisfy, if it is a religion for the world, a religion to demand the attention of a serious man. It is not bound to tell us everything; it need not clear up all difficulties. It must not be a privilege for an aristocracy of thinkers. But it must be a full counterpart to all those great and grave facts in which all men have a share, which make up our perplexity and our misery, and yet impel us to hope. This to Pascal's mind was the decisive point. He felt that the external appearances of a divine sanction in the case of Christianity were so ample and so strongly proved, relatively to the conditions of all our knowledge, as to satisfy his reason; and his review of these converging and cumulative proofs, incompletely developed as we have it, shows with what originality and depth he had mastered the argument. But he wanted, and he found, more than this. For him, beyond the satisfaction of his critical reason, the overwhelming certainty of religion arose out of its deep and manifold correspondence with what he knew of himself and man; with what conscience told him of the moral law, and the world showed him of degradation and sin. It was not only that its credentials could bear the strain of enquiry; what brought religion home to his inward sense of reality was that it had the key to the tormenting contradictions of nature, which he knew so well. And so with the

difficulties attending it. The facts of experience, as well as the suppositions of religion, make it part of the disorder of the world that moral obstacles to truth are as great as intellectual ones. If religion is what it claims to be, it cannot but be a trial of hearts, a test of character and affections; it must be the greatest choice that a man can make or refuse, if the choice is offered him; it must take its place by right, first and foremost among the great things that belong to our moral life. If it is a gift to the unworthy, a gift from Him whose disproportion to man is infinite, a gift of His mercy and remedial lovingkindness to their misery and despair, it is a thing which must be received on its own terms, and with the knowledge that the passions, the worldliness, the indolence of men are its natural rivals and antagonists. Men complain that the tokens of God are indistinct and equivocal; what is this but an exaggeration of the warning of the Bible itself that its God is a "God that hideth Himself"—"*Deus absconditus*"—"hideth Himself" from idle curiosity and unwilling hearts; a warning to remember that the very starting-point of the Gospel is, that man, who was made for God, has lost God, and that the moral separation between God and man accounts for his not finding a God whom he does not care for, whom he does not love, from whom he shrinks. The danger, the plain, but terrible certainty, that met Pascal's eye was, that men, while examining the claims of religion and its reasonableness, forgot the tremendous responsibilities of its judges. He who knew so well what intellect *could* do, knew what it *could not* do; and he knew that the decision in such a matter as religion lay not merely with the intellect alone, but with the whole complex nature of man. He knew the solemn truth that in the will, the affections, the conscience of man lay that which determined his creed, his character, his fate. To Pascal no religion could mean anything, or be anything, but one such as that described in the earliest hymns which welcomed the Gospel; one which "visited" men like "the dayspring from on high, through the

tender mercy of our God, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace"—one which can call forth from man the thanksgiving, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour....For He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is His name." Pascal, too, looking at the longings, the agony of creation, looking at the long roll of God's "noble works," has his Magnificat: "Therefore I stretch forth my arms to my Deliverer, who, after having been foretold for 4000 years, hath come at last to suffer and to die for me, at the time and with all the circumstances predicted of Him; and by His grace I wait for death in peace, in the hope of being united to Him for ever; and I live meanwhile rejoicing, whether in the good things which it pleaseth Him to give me, or in the evils which He sends me for my good, and which He has taught me to endure by His example."*

And now, how does such a book, a book of conflict, so suggestive of intellectual perplexities and troubles, serve as a 'Companion for the Devout Life'? How does it help devotion, the habits and behaviour of the soul in what it has consciously to do with its God?

1. It does so by deepening the grounds of devotion, by elevating the level of religious thought, and enlarging its horizon. Devotion, to be kept pure, needs ideas as well as feelings. Its life and energy, doubtless, are in the affections; love, reverence, trust, joy, hope, praise. But, as in a family, love is everything, yet love may run in poor and ill-directed and unworthy channels, and we ought to cultivate worthy and fitting ways for the exercise and training of our family affections, so it is in devotion. God will accept the true devotion of the most slenderly furnished soul, of the narrowest mind, of the most mistaken sincerity; but affection and thought, feeling and truth,

* 'Pensées,' ed. Faugère, ii. 198.

ought to have their just proportion to one another. On our knees, we need to remember the deep abysses of judgment and mercy in which the foundations of our prayers are laid. We need to keep our mind in with the sense of what is real, and therefore must be so serious, in the familiar things which come before us in every prayer. There are two dangers to which devotion is exposed : it is in danger of becoming formal and uninterested, a sleepy routine ; it is in danger too of becoming artificial, fanciful, petty, of wasting itself in the unchastened flow of feelings and words, of sinking into effeminacies and subtleties and delicate affectations of sentiment and language. This is no fault of Christian devotion, it is the fault of the weaknesses of our affections, of the impurities and alloys even of our humility, our tenderness, our love. But there *is* the danger ; and I can imagine nothing better calculated to rebuke and correct all these "shows of religion" than Pascal's clear, downright seriousness, and the startling boldness with which he faces the real facts of life and religion. It is all the more striking, that the book is not a finished work for the public use, but a collection of fragments which he never expected us to see, in which we surprise him, as it were, in private, putting down his thoughts as they come, not for others but for himself, to test and clear and ascertain his own ideas. The great themes which we are accustomed to in the consecrated language of the church or the oratory—man's fall and redemption, his needs, his strength, his law, his hope, are here the subject of an appeal to men's common sense and judgment, by a layman speaking to laymen. He wakens us up to see the real import of our sacred oracles, by translating them into the language of modern life, and that in one of its most cultivated and perfect forms. And again, the great commonplaces of human life, which are the property of the moralist as much as of the preacher, he teaches us to interweave with our prayers. Others besides him have dwelt on the strange contrarieties of human

nature. Montaigne has done so with all his subtle observation and irony. Dryden did so with his terrible strength of scorn. Pope, in memorable lines, almost paraphrased Pascal.* But it is one thing to make these tremendous antitheses the ornaments of a brilliant work of art, and quite another, to contemplate them before the Cross of Christ. Pascal writes of them with the continuous sense of their practical recoil upon himself; he writes of them in the face of God, and death. A thread of the deepest devotion runs through the book: the great reasoner, the accomplished writer, was the humblest and most fervent of worshippers, meditating on the agony of Christ, praying for the right use of pain and sickness, giving rapturous thanks for having found his peace in God. Agree with Pascal or not, you cannot help learning from him *what it is* to think nobly and adequately of the great questions of religion; you cannot help feeling with him that there are in them depths hard to sound, disasters and hopes which none can dare to make light of. It is difficult not to feel shame, in turning from these pages, so grand in their largeness and precision of thought, their burning and vivid convictions, their simplicity of expression, to our trite and mean conceptions, our contented apathy of prayer, our stilted and empty pomp of phrase, our thin and childish excitement; to feel the strength with which he has seized the amazing wonders both of our condition and of God's remedy—"Say what you will," he writes, "there is something in the Christian religion which is astonishing"†—and then to come back to the superficial apprehension of them, with which we are, so many of us, satisfied, even in our attempts to lift soul and life out of the common grooves of custom.

2. I think the book has another use. If ever there were days which needed bracing and sobering lessons, they are ours.

* Cf. 'Essay on Man,' ii. 1-34, with the passage, "Quelle chimère est-ce donc que l'homme," &c., ed. Faugère, ii.

† "On a beau dire, il faut avouer que la religion chrétienne a quelque chose d'étonnant."

They need it all the more, because in that civilization which affects us all, and which in so many of its results is in such contrast with the ultimate certainties of life as well as with the spirit of religion, there is so much to call forth admiration and gratitude, so much that is beneficent, excellent, noble. But many of us it certainly weakens, it certainly spoils, it certainly blinds. We sweep along in constant smoothness and order; we lose our bearings amid the intoxication of new knowledge, and the consciousness of new powers. We see but a portion of the field; out of the range of our sight are the miserable and the hopeless, a great army, who cannot understand the philosophy of optimism or the blessings of progress. And we who do, almost resent such eloquence as Pascal's; it seems to us overcharged and unnatural; we accuse him of the perverseness of painting life in colours unjustly and falsely dark. His severity is not *all* the truth. Many happily have found—I ought to say, have been granted—a sweetness, a liberty, an innocence, a tranquillity in living, or else a generous and pure delight in toil, which Pascal could not discover. But his severe view is a great side of the truth. It is a side which has impressed some of the greatest of mankind. It is an echo of *his* experience who said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." It is the tradition of the conflicts and temptations which have befallen those who have thought most deeply and felt most keenly, those who have wrestled most stoutly with the evil of their day. If our devotional life is to be the charm with which we may walk safely through so much that is threatening, if our prayers are not to be unmeaning ones, we need in them the tonic of these stern truths. Pascal's austere thoroughness and masculine plainness of speech is very useful to remind us when on our knees that neither life nor religion are the easy and soft things we sometimes take them to be; that, be appearances what they may, there are close at hand to us, every day, contingencies too terrible to speak of; there are, at any rate, in the end, dread certainties which nothing can avert.

With our calm days of order and peace, and our eager ones of triumph, amid the joys of companionship and joint effort, the successive achievements of power, the blessings of our homes, it will one day be a happy thing for us to have reminded ourselves of Pascal's solemn and pathetic words: "The last act is always tragedy."* "I shall die alone" — "*On mourra seul.*"

3. Lastly, no professed master of the spiritual life, no book of practical piety, ever laid down more distinctly the true method of seeking religious light. It is implied in every line of Pascal, that truth in religion is absolutely, and from the very nature of the case, dependent on moral purity and faithfulness. "Revelation," as has been said, "was not given to satisfy doubts, but to make us better men, and it is as we become better men that it becomes light and peace to our souls, even though to the end of life we shall find difficulties in it and in the world around us."† It is the great warning of Pascal, that, if men would find and know God, they must begin by trying to do His will; they must act according to the greatness of the occasion, and to the laws not of one part only but of their whole human nature; they must prepare their souls, habits and tempers and will, as well as intellect. God, the only God worth seeking by man, the God, not of scientific demonstration or theory,‡ but the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Jesus Christ, is revealed only to the heart, the heart of the sincere, the modest, the patient, the self-governed, the loving. And as children who cannot walk learn to walk by walking, so we learn to feel the meaning and greatness of moral truth by acting under the sense of it, by listening in detail to conscience, by being true to what we hear in great things and small. No one ever insisted more earnestly than Pascal that, to know, we must obey. No one reminds us more impressively of the silent power of habits as they grow up, unwatched and

* "Le dernier acte est sanglant, quelque belle que soit la comédie en tout le reste."

† Newman, 'Parochial Sermons,' i. Sermon 18.

‡ 'Pensées,' ed. Faugère, ii. 113-116.

unfelt ; how, when we are trifling with self-discipline and prayer, we are laying the foundation of religious perplexity and trouble, clouding the inward eye and enfeebling the moral taste, our power of insight and judgment, our power of *keeping* the sight of truth which once was given us.

These are not unfitting lessons to carry with us when we retire to recollect ourselves with God. How great a book that is on which we have been commenting, I need not say. The world is agreed on the marvellous gifts which it discloses. But that clearness and penetration of reason, that easy strength, that height and nobleness of thought which captivate our intelligence, that music of expression which charms our ear, are but foils to what is most essential and characteristic in it. It is a book which none can read, friend or enemy, without having it impressed on him that that which drew up this mighty soul to its full height was the ever present vision of a God of righteousness and love, the reaching after the light of perfect goodness. That is what is shown in these reflections from its thoughts and feelings, broken and imperfect as they are. They show an enthusiasm which even in its excess is heroic, for all that had the reality of moral excellence. They show one who was ready to count all things but loss for the sake of that Love, that Cross, which had revealed man's true perfection to man—not riches only, and pleasures, and honour and power, but greater things than these, the magnificent triumphs of intelligence, the joys of the discoverer, the glory and the delights of the pure reason. They show one alive to all greatness and all beauty, moulded for sympathy and for all delicate and all tender affections, to whom all was forgotten in the blaze of the glory of Christ's compassion ; to whom, above all beauty, was the beauty of Charity, above all greatness, the greatness of Charity—that Charity which Jesus Christ first made known among men. Such a book is no unsuitable 'Companion for the Devout Life.'

LECTURE III.

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES' 'INTRODUCTION
TO THE DEVOUT LIFE.'

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CONTENTS OF LECTURE III.

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ST. FRANCIS OF SALES'

'INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE.'

IN showing the value and necessity of such treatises as that which is now under review, our fundamental position must be that holy living is an art, or rather the art of arts. The science upon which this art is built is contained in Holy Scrip-

List of Works referred to in the following Discourse.

- A. Œuvres complètes de Saint François de Sales, Évêque et Prince de Genève. Perisse Frères, Lyon et Paris, 1859.
- B. L'Esprit du bien-heureux François de Sales, Évêque de Genève, représenté en plusieurs de ses actions et paroles remarquables, recueillies de quelques sermons, exhortations, conférences, conversations, livres et lettres de M. Jean-Pierre Camus, Évêque de Belley. Paris, Gaume Frères, 1840.
- C. An Introduction to a Devout Life. Written originally in *French*, by *S. Francis de Sales*, Bishop and Prince of *Geneva*. Faithfully rendered into English. To which is prefix'd a Summary of his Life, and adjoyn'd a Collection of his choicest Maxims. In the Close is added the Communication of Dr. *Thaulerus* with a Poor Beggar, teaching us to resign our selves in all things to the good Pleasure of God.
London, Printed by *Henry Hills*, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, for his Houshold and Chappel, for *Mat. Turner* at the Lamb in High Holbourn. 1686.

ture. Broad far-reaching principles of duty are there laid down, and the motives, which are the animating soul of duty, are clearly exhibited. But he who earnestly resolves to lead a holy life will soon find himself in want of some more methodical instructions than it is the province of Holy Scripture to give. Nor is this the smallest disparagement to that precious volume of Inspiration, which is indeed profitable, not for doctrine alone, but also for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. As Nature is all-sufficient for the uses of our natural life, and furnishes every resource of which man, even in the highest state of civilisation, stands in need, so is Holy Scripture all-sufficient for the uses of spiritual life, furnishing somewhere or other in its ample and varied scope remedies for spiritual disease, safeguards against spiritual dangers, and counsels for such spiritual perfection as it is possible to attain upon earth. But something in the department of human skill and industry (themselves gifts of God as much as Nature is) is clearly necessary to mediate between the resources of Nature and the wants of men,—to make the first applicable to the second. A man turned loose upon the fields to provide himself with food and shelter would make but a sorry shift, unless he knew something of agriculture and building. And by analogy in the spiritual world, while it is easy to contemplate the beauties of Holy Scripture, and theoretically to appreciate

- D S. Francis de Sales, Bishop and Prince of Geneva. By the Author of 'A Dominican Artist,' 'Life of Madame Louise de France,' etc. etc.

"Je veux peu de choses, ce que je veux, je veux fort peu."

New Edition. 1872.

- E. The Spirit of S. Francis de Sales, Bishop and Prince of Geneva, by Jean Pierre Camus, Bishop of Belley. Translated by the Author of 'Life of S. Francis de Sales,' 'A Dominican Artist,' etc. etc. 1872.
- F. The Spiritual Combat, together with the Supplement and the Path of Paradise, by Laurence Scupoli. *A New Translation.* 1875.
- G. The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living. By Jeremy Taylor, D.D., Bishop of Down and Connor, and Dromore. 1873.

its counsels without any other help than itself, the moment we come to address ourselves to practice, to turn our knowledge into action, and to seek for the attainment of Christian virtue, we find the need of some methodical and systematised instructions, drawn from the Scriptures by the skill and research of devout men; and to which their own spiritual experience has contributed warmth, colour, and reality. This is only saying in another form that God has given us not the Scripture only, but also a living Church which has a Prophetical Office—not only a written Word, but a ministry thereof.

But if holy living be an art, it follows that it must be studied as an art, and that little progress can be expected to be made in it except under the conditions which are annexed to progress in any other art. The study must be methodical as well as the text-book, since perfection cannot be in any art attained by mere fitful and casual application to it; we must begin at the beginning, and not attempt the more advanced instructions until we have duly mastered the rudiments; and above all—O great encouragement to the Christian soul which sincerely desires to acquire this art!—we must not be discouraged by frequent failures in our earlier attempts, and by our falling miserably below the high ideal at all times, but make the attempt again and again, with ever buoyant hope and sanguine augury that through the blood and grace of Christ perseverance will by-and-by be crowned with success. How much assiduous previous training is necessary before a would-be draughtsman is qualified to draw from Nature! And when he is so qualified, how is sketch after sketch thrown away or torn up as a failure, of which he has rather reason to be ashamed! And shall we suppose that a moral endeavour, or a series of moral endeavours, will be at once successful, which has for its object nothing less than the copying of the features of Christ's character into our own heart and soul?

Those who regard holy living as an art, and are prepared

to study it under the conditions to which the study of every art is subjected, will find in the vast field of Christian literature many manuals of great service to them, but none, we venture to think, so winning, so attractive, and of such universal applicability as St. Francis of Sales' 'Introduction to the Devout Life.' Camus, Bishop of Belley, who did for Francis what Boswell did for Johnson,* recording his table-talk with a copiousness of detail which places the character of the saint before our eyes in a manner much more lively than the most elaborate biography could do, tells us, in a passage of the 'Esprit de St. François de Sales,' that the germ of all the teaching in the 'Introduction'† is to be found in 'The Spiritual Combat' of Laurence Scupoli, a book which Francis prized above all other spiritual treatises, calling it his director, his dear book, his favourite book, and telling Madame de Chantal‡ that he had carried it in his pocket for eighteen years, and never re-read it without profit. But whatever relation may exist between the two works, we think it will be universally admitted that Francis's is the more attractive of the two. Scupoli's is a stern book in comparison; its fundamental idea, that of combat, tended to bring out the antagonistic side of the Christian life; and it is wanting in those numerous illustrations with which the 'Introduction' is flowered, and which, if it must be admitted that a treatise is more nervous and sinewy without them than with them, do yet smooth the reader's path

* Camus was, at the early age of twenty-six, consecrated Bishop of Belley (the see adjoining that of Geneva, on the south-western side), by Francis of Sales. This established an intimacy between the two prelates which has resulted in our having a much more intimate acquaintance with the character of Francis than we could have gained in any other way. See a short interesting notice of Camus in D, chap.

vii. p. 181, and a much longer one in B, tome i. pp. xxi-cxiv. The writer of the first of these gives the exact impression of him derived from the 'Esprit,' when she says (p. 183), "One cannot but picture him to oneself as a restless, somewhat fidgety personage."

† See E, p. 44, and B, tome premier, p. 165, partie iii. section xii.

‡ See A, tome troisième, p. 154, col. i. lettre cxix.

for him and lure him onwards. Francis's one secret in dealing with souls—a secret which he was sometimes found fault with for carrying to a vicious excess,—was to win by love rather than to terrify by fear. "More flies are caught by a spoonful of honey* than by a whole barrel of vinegar," he would say; and, in pursuance of this and similar maxims, he has made his treatise as inviting as possible to the reader, decking and varie-gating it with similes which, if sometimes quaint, are always beautiful. In profuseness of imagery, he is a very Jeremy Taylor.

And yet in another point he is strongly and favourably contrasted with Taylor. Francis is brief and terse; Taylor is prolix and diffuse. Francis, true to his principle of attracting at all hazards, objected to length† in religious discourses; and he has acted on this principle in his 'Devout Life,' in which, perhaps, more of valuable counsel is compressed into a very short compass than in any other work of the kind.

This great treatise, of which Marie de Medicis showed her estimation by causing a copy of it, bound in gold and gems,‡ to be sent to James I. of England, and which many a soul, both Catholic and Protestant, has learned by experience to prize above gold and gems, had its origin in certain§ advices given by Francis to a lady who had been turned from a life of

* "The saintly Bishop went so far as to say that it is better to withhold a deserved rebuke than to administer it ungraciously, and that judicious silence was far preferable to the truth roughly told. 'You will catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a whole barrel of vinegar!' he used to say; and 'No sauce was ever spoilt by sugar!' 'Human nature is so formed that it always hardens itself against rigorous dealings, but yields to gentleness. Reproof is bitter in itself, and only loving-kindness can make it pa-

latable.'"—D, p. 190.

† "Believe me," he would say, "I speak from long experience; the more you say, the less people will remember; and the less you say, the more they will profit. Those who load their hearers' memory destroy it, just as you put out a lamp by filling it too full, or kill plants by unmeasured watering. When a discourse is too long, the end makes one forget the middle, and the middle puts out the beginning."—E, p. 347.

‡ See D, p. 172.

§ See D, pp. 169-172.

worldliness by his ministry at Paris, and had placed herself under his guidance. These advices he had from time to time committed to writing, and left them with her when his duties called him away from Paris to his diocese of Geneva. The new director under whom she placed herself after the departure of Francis, perceiving the singular excellence of these memoranda, wrote to him to request their publication. About the same time a request reached him from Henry IV. of France, to the effect "that he would write a book concerning true religion, such as should set it forth in its rightful beauty, and show the world that holiness of life was not incompatible with a busy, active career, whether at court or in the province, amid the whirl of affairs or the claims of society, a holiness alike free from repulsive severity and treacherous laxity."

Francis, regarding the king's request, concurring as it did with that of the director, as a providential indication of God's will in the matter, threw his loose memoranda into shape, and compiled them into a treatise, giving it the modest name of an 'Introduction to the Devout Life.' Even if the work were not from the pen of so great a master in the spiritual life, the origin and design of it would give it a certain value. For it had its source, not in any theory of Christian virtue and of the method of attaining it, but in the actual guidance of a living soul. The memoranda out of which it was framed were drawn up originally with a view to a particular case, and were in the main answers to questions and difficulties which had arisen in the course of Christian experience. Such an origin would give to any devotional work a reality which it could not otherwise possess; for, "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The spiritual experience of one soul greatly resembles that of another, and the pastoral guidance which is sound and profitable for one will be sure, when made the common property of the Christian world, to meet the wants of others. And while its origin ensures reality, its design gives it an universal ap-

plicability. It was not written for the guidance of the contemplative and the recluse, but of those who, while constrained to live in the world, yet earnestly desire to be kept from its evil. "My intent," says Francis in his Preface,* "is to instruct such as live in towns, in families, in the court, and are by their condition obliged to a public life; who very often, under the colour of a pretended impossibility, will not so much as think of undertaking a devout life. . . . And to them I make it appear that, as the mother pearls live in the sea without receiving one drop of salt water; as toward the *Chelidonian* Islands there are fountains of fresh water in the midst of the sea; and as the fire-fly flies in the flames without burning its wings: so a vigorous and constant soul may live in the world without participating of any worldly humour; may find out springs of sweet piety amid the brackish waters of secular affairs; and fly among the flames of earthly concupiscences without burning the wings of the sacred desires of a devout life." So that those well-known words of the Christian poet might form an appropriate motto to the work:—

" We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky :
The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask ;
Room to deny ourselves ; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God."

The arrangement of the work is very lucid and simple. The first part, presupposing the existence of good desires in the soul, aims at leading it forward to a formal consecration of all its powers and faculties to God's service, in short, to a renewal of the Baptismal Vow. The means offered for bringing the good desires to this good effect are ten brief but very edifying

* C, Author's Preface, § 2.

Meditations on such topics as "The end for which we were created," "Sin," "Death," "Judgment," "Hell," and "Paradise." The solemn protest, in which these Meditations are made to issue, is to be read over before the priest after a general confession, and previously to receiving absolution from him.

It strikes us that this part might be turned to very good account if detached from the body of the work, and put forth separately as a Manual for Catechumens previously to Confirmation. It is in the period of adolescence, when the frivolities of childhood are outgrown, and yet the heart retains something of its early freshness and susceptibility, it is then more especially that those good desires make their appearance which Francis calls "the flowers of the heart,"* and the blossoming of which he says is the symptom that we should prune our consciences from dead works, so that they may bring forth fruit to God. The Meditations which he prescribes are not only admirably adapted to deepen and fix any religious impressions which might be made upon the mind of the young when preparing for Confirmation; they would serve the equally important purpose of a discipline for the work of meditation in general. One chief reason why this work presents so many difficulties to us all is, that it is not made to form any part of our early spiritual training. The Meditations of the 'Introduction' might be made the text-book, by a judicious use of which young people of moderate intelligence and devotion might be inured in their early years to a practice, which they would find to be of the utmost value in their subsequent spiritual course. A very few and obvious omissions and alterations, which would not at all touch the core of the argument, would remove everything distinctively Romish, and adapt this first part to the use of Catechumens in our own or any other communion of Christendom.

* C, part i. chap. v. pp. 24, 25.

We cannot leave this first part of the work before us without observing the spirituality of the definition of devotion, which the author lays down at the outset. Devotion, he tells us, consists not in fastings, nor in almsgivings, nor in heaping up prayers upon prayers, and accumulating a catalogue of religious observances (if these were the essential elements of devotion, who would be so devout as the Pharisee of the parable?); rather devotion is the love of God intensified, that fervent surrender of the heart and will to Him which not only does Him service, but delights and rejoices in doing it. "Charity * and Devotion differ no more one from the other than fire from flame: for charity is a spiritual fire, which, when it is well kindled, is called devotion; so that devotion adds nothing to the fire of charity save the flame, which renders charity cheerful, active, and diligent, not only in the observance of God's commandments, but also in the practice of heavenly counsels and inspirations." And again: "If charity be † milk, devotion is the cream; if charity be a plant, devotion is the flower; if charity be a precious stone, devotion is its lustre; if charity be a rich balm, devotion is its odour,—yea the odour of sweetness, which comforts men and rejoices angels."

Part II. treats of the means of grace, as the instrumentality for attaining the Christian virtues. The method of meditation is explained in detail, though with great brevity; short forms of morning and evening devotion are given; instructions for attendance upon the different ordinances of religion, as the Roman Church has received and practises them; and, among the rest, directions for the hearing and reading of God's Holy Word, though unhappily, and in sad consistency with the genius of Romanism, which has ever shown itself jealous of trusting the people with the Scriptures, the chapter‡ which is headed

* C, part i. chap. i. p. 7.

† C, part i. chap. ii. p. 13.

‡ C, part ii. chap. xvii. p. 186.

thus contains no allusion whatever to any book of the Bible. Francis's own mind was thoroughly imbued with Holy Scripture, and his writings abundantly testify to the savour and relish which it had for his spiritual palate. And yet so completely is he the victim of a timid and mischievous system that he can write a chapter on "How we ought to hear and read God's Holy Word," without sending his disciple to any purer sources of that Word than Bonaventura, Blosius, Augustine, Jerome, and the 'Lives of the Saints.' Our own Bishop Taylor, in his 'Holy Living,' has a chapter* headed in the same way, which exhibits a curious and interesting contrast, and may supplement the grievous deficiencies of Francis's teaching in respect of the Word of God. Yet, this great defect notwithstanding, this second part of the treatise is not the least masterly, nor the least characteristic of the author's mind, nor the least edifying. His chapter on "Spiritual Recollection"† can be called nothing less than lovely; more than almost any other writer, Francis has the happy art of clothing what he recommends in the most winning colours, and making it amiable and attractive. Witness this passage, in which he advocates frequent daily retreats into the closets of the heart, for the purpose of refreshing ourselves by a brief communion with the Saviour: "As birds have their nests upon trees to retire to, when they are weary; and deer have bushes and thickets wherein to hide and shroud themselves, and to take the cool of the shade in the summer; even so, *Philothea*, should our hearts choose out every day some place, either upon Mount *Calvary*, or in the wounds

* "The Word of God is all those commandments and revelations, those promises and threatenings, the stories and sermons recorded in the Bible: nothing else is the Word of God that we know of by any certain instrument. The good books and spiritual discourses, the sermons or homilies written or spoken by men, are but the word of

men, or rather explications of, and exhortations according to, the Word of God; but of themselves they are not the Word of God. In a sermon, the text only is in a proper sense to be called God's Word," &c.—G, chap. iv. § iv. p. 193.

† C, part ii. chap. xii. p. 154.

of our Redeemer, or in some other place near Him, there to make our spiritual retreat upon every occasion, there to recreate and refresh ourselves amidst the turmoils of exterior affairs, and there to be as in a castle, to defend ourselves against temptations." Or this, in which the recognition of our Lord's life and death as the one subject on which the soul must feed by meditation, is enough, one would think, to remove the prejudices of the staunchest Protestant.

"But,* above all, I recommend to you mental and cordial prayer, and especially that which has for its subject the life and passion of our Lord; for beholding Him often by meditation, your soul will be filled with Him, you will learn His carriage, and frame your actions according to the model of His. He is the Light of the world; it is then in Him, and by Him, and for Him, that we must be guided and illuminated. He is the Tree of desire, under the shadow of which we must refresh ourselves. He is the living Fountain of *Jacob*, to wash away all our stains. In fine, as little children, by hearing their mothers and by prattling with them, learn to speak; so we, conversing with our Saviour by meditation, and observing His words, His works, and His affections, shall soon by help of His grace learn to speak, work, and will like Him. We must stop here, *Philothea*; and believe me, we cannot go to God the Father but through this gate: for even as the looking-glass cannot terminate our sight unless the back be tinned or leaded; so the Divinity could not well be contemplated by us in this world, if it were not joined to the sacred humanity of our Saviour, whose life and death is the most proportionable, delightful, sweet, and profitable object we can choose for our ordinary meditation."

But it is the method of meditation proposed to the reader in this section of the work, which gives it its great practical value.

* C, part ii. chap. i. § 2, p. 112.

There is here a nerve and a vigour, which counterbalances and acts as a corrective to what might be thought the too great lusciousness of the writer's general style. The great merit of the method is, that it gives just sufficient direction for the satisfactory conduct of the exercise, without overburdening the disciple with a number of minute rules, in the attempt to observe which the free action of the mind might be hampered. After the preparation, which consists of calling to mind God's presence (three or four methods of doing which are suggested), and invoking His aid, follow the considerations, which are the body of the exercise. Upon these arise certain affections and resolutions, which are its practical result. Then come the concluding devotions, and, last of all, what Francis calls the spiritual nosegay, the instruction for gathering which must be given in his own words, as it is so completely characteristic of his manner, and of the general tone of his treatise.* "To this I add that you should gather a little nosegay of devotion. My meaning is this. Such as have been walking in a pleasant garden go not willingly thence without gathering four or five flowers to smell to, and keep in their hands all the day after. Even so, when our mind has discoursed by meditation on some mystery, we should choose one, or two, or three points, which we have found most proper for our advancement, on which we must busy our mind, and spiritually smell to them all the rest of the day. And this must be done in the self-same place where we made our meditation, walking alone, and entertaining our thoughts some short time after."

Here, again, we cannot but think that the section of the work which treats of the subject of meditation, comprising at most eight or nine very short chapters, might be, with great advantage to the interests of true religion, published as a separate tract. And the editor might do good service by an

* C, part ii. chap. vii. § 4, pp. 136, 137.

appendix of his own, showing how the proposed method of meditation might be applied not only to theses and historical subjects, but also to passages of Holy Scripture drawn from various parts of the inspired volume. Reading the Bible is with Protestants the religious exercise which has taken the place of meditation. But too often, even with the right-minded and devout, the reading, partly from want of time, partly from reluctance to make the necessary mental effort, is simply reading; it does not go on to what the Collect calls, "marking, learning, and inwardly digesting;" attention only is exercised, and not thought. And, in order that the soul of the reader may be really brought into contact with the Word of God, thought there must be, not, indeed, speculative thought, which raises curious questions, and is stimulated by the sense of an intellectual difficulty, but the thought which aims only at edification, and recognises the heart as the organ by which alone both edification and real enlightenment can be received. Surely instructions might be framed to facilitate thought of this description; and a few patterns of meditations on different passages of Holy Scripture might be drawn up. And in doing this the method of meditation proposed in the 'Introduction' might be used as a platform to build upon.

The third and fourth parts may be called the body of the work, the third treating of the Christian virtues, the fourth of temptations and the method of meeting them. The virtues are not methodically arranged, nor very exhaustively treated; in both these respects 'The Devout Life' is inferior to Taylor's 'Holy Living,' which announces, as the foundation of this branch of the subject, that "Christian* morality, according to the Apostle's arithmetic, hath but these three parts: 1. Sobriety; 2. Justice; 3. Religion. 'For the grace of God, that bringeth

* G, chap. ii. § 1, p. 47.

salvation, hath appeared to all men ; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' ” Having thus laid in Holy Scripture itself a sure foundation for that part of his work which describes the Christian virtues, Taylor is at once led, when he arrives at the last and most important division of his subject, to speak of faith,* that great seminal virtue of the Christian character. For the first thing that suggests itself to a religious teacher, when he has to dilate upon “living godly in this present world” (or, in other words, on our “duty towards God”), is of course faith. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” “My duty towards God,” says the English Catechism, “is to believe in Him,”—such belief being the essential foundation, on which the two affections of primary obligation, fear and love, must be built,—“to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him.” Francis makes no mention of faith at all, either towards God or Christ. The *love* of God and Christ finds large room in his treatise, not indeed as an isolated virtue, but as a necessary ingredient of the Christian state of mind, which is always rising to the surface when that state of mind is reviewed or discussed. But on *faith* there is an absolute silence, which would be singular if a very slight acquaintance with Roman moral theology did not furnish the explanation of it. According to that moral theology,† the passive acceptance,

* Chap. iv. § 1, p. 169.

† The nature of faith, according to the view taken of it by Roman theologians, is well exhibited in the ‘*Canones et Decreta Concilii Tridentini*.’ See, for example, chap. xv. of the Sixth Session, which is headed thus: “That by any mortal sin grace is lost, but not faith.” “It is to be maintained that not only by infidelity (by which

faith itself too is lost), but also by any other mortal sin whatever, the grace of justification, once received, is lost; for the doctrine of the divine law, which we must defend, excludes from the kingdom of God, not only infidels, but also such of the faithful as are fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers,

which, as a general rule, all professing Christians yield to the doctrines of Christianity, constitutes faith. If, therefore, you wish to find faith advocated and insisted upon, you must go to their apologetic theology. The atheist and the sceptic have

extortioners, and all others who commit mortal sins, from which by the help of divine grace they might abstain, and for which they are separated from the grace of Christ." One of the Canons (xxviii.), founded on this "Decretum," is: "If any one shall say that when grace has been lost by sin, faith also is always lost at the same time; or that the faith which remains is not real faith, albeit not living; or that he who hath faith without charity is no Christian; let him be accursed."

The view usually taken by members of the Reformed Church of the faith which justifies is thus anathematized (Session vi. Canon xii.): "If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in the Divine mercy, which remitteth sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that trust alone by which we are justified; let him be accursed."

The late Bishop O'Brien remarks in his 'Ten Sermons upon the Nature and the Effects of Faith' (London, 1833), note I, that "whatever materials for collecting the views of the Romish Church upon the nature of faith may be supplied by the Decree and Canons of this Session" (of the Council of Trent, Sess. vi.) . . . "no explicit definition of faith is to be found in either. Bellarmine, however, supplies the defect, and I suppose may be received as sufficient authority on the subject. Their divines, he tells us, 'fidem historicam, et miraculorum, et promissionum, unam et eandem esse docent; atque illam unam non esse proprie notitiam aut fiduciam, sed assensum certum atque firmissimum, ob auctoritatem primæ veritatis, et hanc unam

esse fidem justificantem.'—*De Just.* l. i. cap. 4."

By "fides historica," in the above extract from Bellarmine, is probably meant faith *in the narratives of Holy Scripture*—not such as we yield to ordinary history. For in the 'Catechism of the Council of Trent' (Cap. I. Quæst. i. p. 9, ed. Tauchnitz, Lipsiæ), where faith is defined as the faculty "whereby we yield a full assent to what is handed down to us on divine authority," the faculty, "by virtue of which we hold that to be a settled point, which the authority of our Holy Mother the Church warrants to have been handed down by God," it is added: "Whence we perceive how great is the difference between this faith which we have in God, and *that which we give to the writers of human history.*" The section goes on to say that faith, though it differs in degree and worthiness (*magnitudine ac dignitate*), (to prove which last point these texts are adduced, "Faith without works is dead," and "The faith which worketh by love,") is yet the same in kind in all instances of it. From this, and the Canon above quoted, it is evident that Roman divines make a point of maintaining that even *dead* faith is *real* faith. In so far, they have St. James on their side, who does not withhold from dead faith the *name* of faith. But how this dead faith "differs greatly" (in its nature) from belief in the narratives of profane history, and how the faith of mere intellectual conviction (such as the devils have) can be "the same in kind" with that of confidence and affection, which animates the saints, it is difficult to see.

need of faith, and must be brought to it by argument; but books of devotion are not written for atheists and sceptics, but for the spiritual furtherance and edification of those who accept without hesitation the whole circle of Revealed Truth, and who may be appealed to on the ground of any article of it, with a certainty that they will at all events admit the premiss. Hence in those to whom such books as 'The Introduction to the Devout Life' and 'The Spiritual Combat' are addressed, faith is presupposed. We of the Reformed Communions believe that faith, to be of any avail whatever, must be something far beyond a bare assent to doctrine upon competent authority,—that it must be such an assent as exerts a practical influence on the character, and works by stirring some of the affections,* fear, hope, or

* "The true meaning, therefore, of *faith in Christ, or in God through Christ*, is not merely or properly belief in the Scripture narrative concerning our Lord; or an assent of the understanding to certain propositions derived from that narrative, however true, and however important they be: but it is TRUST IN CHRIST, OR IN GOD THROUGH CHRIST, founded upon such an assent; an entire and unreserved confidence in the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us; a full reliance upon Him and His work."—O'Brien's 'Ten Sermons,' ed. 1833, Sermon I. p. 14.

And with more discrimination and accuracy (as it appears to the present writer) Professor Heurtley:—"Others make justifying faith to consist in *trust*. And trust indeed is inseparable from it; but so also are hope and fear, and other affections, according to the various objects about which it is conversant. If God's mercy in Christ Jesus be the object, then doubtless faith takes the form of trust; but if heaven and its eternal joys be the object, then it takes the form of desire

or hope; or, if the dreadful consequences of falling from God be the object, then it takes the form of fear. And the like may be said of *obedience*, which is another word put by some into the definition of justifying faith. Obedience is the fruit of faith, and wherever faith is genuine, and time and opportunity are given, it will be sure to spring from it; but the two notions are perfectly distinct, nay so distinct, that to confound them goes high to subvert the terms of the Gospel Covenant Thus then, though faith has its seat in the understanding, yet it avails nothing, *unless it pass from thence to the will and the affections* And as the faith by which we are justified influences the will and the affections, it must needs manifest itself, as circumstances arise, in the various acts which have their source in them. And hence it is not unfrequently spoken of as though it were identical with these acts, or rather with the habits from which they proceed; though, if we would speak accurately, we must distinguish it from them."—Heurtley's 'Bampton Lectures on

love. We hold faith in God and in Christ to be the first principle of all good in human character; and therefore for any Reformed divine to discuss the Christian virtues without mentioning faith, would indeed be to ignore the first rudiments of the subject, as it presents itself to our minds. Taylor consequently vindicates his claim to a place among the Reformed divines, by giving us in his 'Holy Living' a chapter on Faith, with several sections and subsections. Not that even Taylor, if we may venture to criticise so learned and so accomplished a divine, assigns to faith that altogether pre-eminent position which, as it seems to us, the New Testament claims for it. Faith, or at least the faith which is accounted unto man for righteousness, is the nerve and sinew of every virtue, and especially of self-sacrifice. This universal presence of it, then, in the highest acts of Christian virtue should be fully and fairly exhibited by every writer on moral theology. Taylor probably might have done better to exhibit the virtues, not in the order in which the Apostle mentions them, beginning with the lowest (sobriety) and working up to the highest (godliness), but in the converse order, which would have carried him at once to faith, as the source of all good in man. For surely the natural order of Christian virtue is that it should begin with the highest relations of the soul, and thence flow down into its lower and more earthly conversation, "like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his clothing." The first and

Justification,' Oxford, 1846, pp. 172, 173, 185.

In his thoughtful and interesting work on the 'Apostles' Creed' (London, 1842), the Rev. Thomas Griffith has a part in which he treats of "Belief of the Truth." His might stand for the view taken by Reformed divines in general. It is very exhaustive. "Belief" is defined as "I.

An intelligent conviction of Truth.
II. An hearty affection for Truth.
III. A practical submission to Truth."

The reader will find the Roman and Reformed views of the nature of justifying faith, with the different shades of both, well set forth in Bishop Harold Browne's 'Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England,' Art. xi.

great commandment must take precedence of, and give vitality to, the second, which is only like unto it. Aye, vitality. It was one of Francis's own choice maxims:* "We ought not to love our neighbour, either because he is virtuous, or because we hope he will be so, but because God commands us."

But while on the one hand, in discussing the Christian virtues, its evangelical pre-eminence should be assigned to faith, on the other these virtues should not all be merged in faith, (as it has been too much the fashion to merge them in sermons and treatises of a certain school,) but exhibited in distinct individuality, and commended separately, each by itself, to the pursuit of Christians. The faith inculcated by a certain class of divines resembles Aaron's rod, which swallowed up the rods of Jaunes and Jambres, and left nothing else of its own nature creeping upon the earth. But the faith commended to us in Holy Scripture is like the tree of life, a tree prolific of large variety, and serviceable for healing no less than nourishment, "which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." While, however, this variety of Christian virtues should be fully set forth, it is very important that the disciple should be warned against the distraction likely to arise from multiplicity of pursuit. And Francis gives this warning faithfully. At the beginning of his third part, he has two chapters† on the choice we ought to make in the exercise of virtues, not attempting to practise them all at once, but selecting one or two, as our vocation in life or our peculiar spiritual needs may dictate, for special cultivation, at all events for a season. Unity of effort is‡ essential

* C, Maxim 8, "Towards our neighbour."

† C, pp. 221, 233.

‡ Unity of endeavour, as one secret of the attainment of virtue, is well set

forth in a little work called 'Evening Thoughts, by a Physician' (London: Van Voorst, 1852), which is perhaps less generally known than it deserves to be. Thus the "Physician" writes

to progress in the spiritual life; and greatly should we find ourselves forwarded, if we concentrated our prayers and endeavours for some time on one of those graces of the Christian character in which we find ourselves most deficient, not indeed dropping all but this, but rather subordinating other efforts to it. "It is profitable,"* says Francis, "that every one should choose a particular exercise of Christian virtue, not to abandon the rest, but to keep his mind in a more settled order and employment."

The fourth part treats, as we have said, of temptations, and of the method of meeting them. And as we have recently compared our author with Taylor, to the disadvantage of the former, so now on the other hand we cannot help observing as a singular and strange defect in 'The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living,' that the antagonistic side of the Christian life should be almost entirely overlooked in it. It is really impossible to estimate how much of reality, and therefore how much of persuasiveness, is lost to any treatise on Christian ethics by the mere absence of this feature. It is easy to give, and still easier to appreciate, a glowing description, decked out in poetical colours, of any number of virtues; but a soul which is to be really helped by a treatise of this sort wants not to

on the subject of "Fixed Ideas" (p. 101):

"Men who are earnestly bent on any scientific investigation, or in carrying out any active scheme, political, benevolent, or personal, often give up their whole minds to it for a certain time. It becomes the fixed idea for months and years. . . . And how much real progress is made in this way. In self-discipline, might it not be as well to follow a similar plan? Let one of the faults which most prominently rises before the introverted eye of the self-inspector be made the chief object

of moral improvement for a certain fixed time. Endeavour to be unselfish for six weeks. Give half a year to the cure of wandering thoughts. Resist indulgence in day-dreams for a month. Cultivate entire purity of thought and feeling as the chief object for several weeks. Practise 'to listen and discourse for others' good' for a year. Let each choose for the object of this silent struggle that error of which he is most conscious."

* E, chap. ii. § 3, p. 17, and C, part iii. chap. i. § 6, p. 226.

admire but to practise, not to stand afar off and say, "How beautiful!" but to work virtue into the texture of its character. And the moment an honest attempt is made, not merely to admire, but to exemplify the Christian graces, that moment is elicited all the antagonism which a corrupt heart, a godless world, and a legion of evil spirits, can offer. And therefore the chief question to which he who sincerely intends to put in practice the counsels of a spiritual book needs an answer is, "How am I to deal with the opposition which is sure to arise from all quarters?" The late Bishop Bagot is said to have deeply impressed a congregation in Wells Cathedral by a very simple and unpretentious, but intensely experimental sermon on the great difficulty of being good. Everybody felt, as it was evident the preacher himself did, that, say what you will, and paint goodness as attractively as you please, it *is* very difficult. Now one of the principal things that a spiritual guide has to do, be he a living man, or a dead one who through the pages of a book "yet speaketh," is—not to hide the difficulties, but—to help us over them. And in proportion as he blinks them or slurs them over, just in that proportion is he unserviceable to us, and his work unreal. Francis, whose own favourite devotional work was Scupoli's 'Spiritual Combat,' was not likely to err in this direction. He has given us a whole book, consisting of fifteen chapters, on the subject of temptation, or rather on the antagonisms which arise in the Christian course. For it is observable how, in the latter part of the book, without however drawing any formal distinction, he passes from temptations proper to what we should rather call trials and crosses, such as unquietness, sadness, spiritual dryness and barrenness, "when it happens," to use his own words,* "that we are so destitute, and deprived of all sense of devotion, that we think our souls a wild, barren, fruitless field, in which there

* C, part iv. chap. xiv. § 1, p. 597.

is neither path nor way to find God, nor any dew of grace to refresh us." After suggesting several causes which may have led to this comfortless state as a judicial infliction, such as spiritual indolence, the presumption begotten by spiritual favours, the glutting ourselves with worldly contentments and so forth, he then adduces this topic of consolation, which both in itself, and in the illustration with which he garnishes it, is truly characteristic of his mind and style.

* "It is a great mistake made by many, and specially by women, to believe that the service we do to God without savour, without tenderness and sense of heart, is less agreeable to His Divine Majesty; since on the contrary our actions are like roses, which, though when they are fresh they have more beauty, yet when they are dry they have more strength and sweetness; for just so, though our works done with tenderness of heart are more acceptable to us—to us, I say, who consider only our own gratification—yet, when they are performed in time of dryness and barrenness, they have more sweetness and a better esteem in the presence of God. . . . The less there is of our particular interest in the pursuit of virtues, the more brightly shines our love to God, and the more pure it is. A child easily kisses his mother, when she gives him sugar; but it is a sign of greater love, if he kiss her after she has given him wormwood."

The fifth and last part of the 'Introduction' instructs us in the necessity, and in the method, of solemnly renewing our holy purposes, in pursuance of the original written protestation, by which we dedicated ourselves to God's service, according to the directions of the first part. "There is no clock," says Francis,† "be it never so good, but must be wound up twice a day,

* C, part iv. chap. xiv. § 10, p. 608, and § 11, p. 610.

† C, part v. chap. i. § 2, p. 621.

morning and evening" (clock mechanism has made an advance since his time), "and at least once a year taken to pieces, to take away the rust it has gathered, to mend what is bent or broken, and to repair what is worn. So he that has a true care of his heart ought to wind it up to God evening and morning by the aforesaid exercises, and moreover many times take a review of his state, redress and rectify it, and at least once a year take it to pieces, and examine diligently every part of it, that is, all the affections and passions of it, that all defects may be repaired. And as the clockmaker with some delicate oil anoints the wheels, the springs, and all the moving parts of his clock, that the motions may be more nimble, and the clock less subject to rust; so the devout person who has thus examined his heart, must, in order to renew it well indeed, anoint it with the sacraments of confession and the holy Eucharist. This exercise will repair your forces decayed by time, warm your heart, make your good resolutions return green, and your virtues blossom."

A certain time is to be set apart annually for a retreat. The original protestation, with the circumstances under which it was made, is then to be considered in all its points, and the prayers and thanksgivings which it may suggest are to be offered over it. This done, the soul is to examine itself in detail as to its relations towards God, itself, and its neighbour, and then on the state of its affections and desires. And then are to follow certain meditations suitable to the renewal of our good purposes, on such topics as the excellency of the soul, the excellency of the virtues, the examples of the saints, the love of Christ, the love of God,—all designed to issue in a solemn formal renewal of our act of self-dedication, which act was also preceded, as we remember, and led up to by a series of meditations. And thus this most methodical, as well as most beautiful, most winning, most persuasive work circles back again to the point from which it started, through a large variety of edifying

sentiment, which, however profuse, is never diffuse, like some noble river which, having taken its rise from the fountains of the great deep, meanders through the most diversified scenery, pasture and cornfield, forest and glade, and at length pouring itself into the ocean, and being lost there, mingles once more with the abyss of waters.

It is an evidence, we think, of the power and greatness of a book that considerable passages of it admit of being detached from the body of the work, and applied to separate uses. The work before us will quite stand such a test. We have shown that a most valuable Confirmation manual might be formed out of it, and that its instructions on meditation, extracted and published separately, might prove a great help in that difficult and yet most profitable exercise. And now we may add that the fifth part, or at all events the greater portion of it, might be most profitably used as a manual of preparation for the holy Communion, or, where that is received so often that it no longer constitutes a marked period in our Christian course, and any long preparation for it is out of the question, as a manual of devotion for a retreat,—for two or three days, that is, given up to seclusion from ordinary society and secular pursuits, with a view to recruit the flagging forces of the spiritual life by a more solemn, more detailed, more fervent intercourse with God than conversation in the world furnishes opportunities for. Members of the Reformed Church have of late seen more clearly, and admitted more frankly, that devout persons might find in annual retreats judiciously conducted, a real source of spiritual strength and a real means of spiritual progress; and accordingly in one form or another (and it is quite right that there should be many forms of them, adapted to the different exigencies and temperaments of different minds), they are creeping into our practice. In all forms of them, from the purely private retreat, on some anniversary of mere private concern, up to the retreat which has a perfect ecclesiastical

organisation, and in which the meditations are given, and every detail of the proceedings regulated, by the clergy, Francis of Sales' fifth part might be turned to good account; but it would chiefly serve for private retirements of this sort, for which indeed it was originally designed; and possibly (though this is a matter which each individual must decide for himself by his own experience), these private retirements, especially in places where daily access is given to the services of the church, might be found quite equally profitable with those which are ecclesiastically organised.

Having now reviewed rapidly the successive parts of this great work, it will be well for us, by way of giving unity to our subject, to consider what may be the fundamental principle of the moral theology set forth in it, what is the primary cell (to use an image drawn from vegetable growth) round which all Francis's precepts of holy living gather themselves and form. And here we at once come across the relation which such works as that before us bear to Holy Scripture. Just as every art is only an application of some force or secret of Nature to the purposes of human life, so every treatise of holy living is only an expansion and adaptation of some one great principle, which sometimes lies upon the surface, sometimes lurks in the recesses, of Holy Scripture. Thus, Scupoli's 'Spiritual Combat' is only an unfolding, into full blossom, of that wonderful passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians which sets forth the spiritual antagonists with whom the Christian is called upon to wrestle, and the panoply of God which he must take to him if he would come off victorious in the conflict. The fundamental thought of Francis's book is rather more recondite. We take it to be one of the many precious and edifying thoughts, in which that gracious invitation of the Saviour, which is in itself a miniature Gospel, is so peculiarly rich: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you

rest." This is the first rest to which the invitation summons the heavy laden, and it is a rest *given*, and in no sense *gained*. But the succeeding context promises another rest, which is in some sense gained ; * for it is to be experienced by the soul in taking upon it the easy yoke and the light burden, and in learning of the meek and lowly-hearted Jesus.

Rest, then, is an absolutely essential ingredient in the Christian life. Peace given is its very foundation ; peace both given, and in a certain sense gained, is concurrent with its whole course, and consummates it in Paradise. And is not this the ever-recurring thought of Francis's book, the thought which is always obtruding itself, and makes its presence ever felt, because it is always in the mind of the author ? "Unquietness,"† says he, in a chapter of the fourth part devoted to this subject (and he embraces explicitly that unquietness which is bred from a consciousness of our own spiritual maladies and shortcomings) "is the greatest evil that can come to the soul excepting sin . . . it is not a single temptation, but a spring from which many other temptations are derived." The soul, struggling too passionately and anxiously to rid itself of its maladies, resembles a bird taken in a net, which only entangles itself the more in striving to get loose, or a commonwealth in a state of civil discord, which lays itself open as an easy prey to the enemy. And hence he would have us "examine ourselves more than once every day whether our soul be indeed in our hands, or

* "This is the first rest—rest through the revelation of the Father, rest in the knowledge of God This is the second rest—the rest of the meek and lowly mind, 'the mind that is in Christ Jesus.'

"But how shall we attain this meek and lowly mind ? It is the mind of sons, and we attain it by knowing the Father. His love, revealed in the heart, produces its own likeness there ; His mercy pacifies the conscience, and

subdues the whole man before a forgiving God. Pride has no longer its accustomed place ; our soul becomes like a weaned child. The two rests are thus identical ; they are the inseparable parts of one perfect and blessed whole."—'Seeds of Thought,' by William Tait, M.A., Incumbent of St. Matthew's, Rugby : London, 1863.

† C, part iv. chap. xi. §§ 1, 2, 3, 4, pp. 566, 568, 569, 570.

whether some passion or unquietness hath not robbed us of it."

Again, in his chapter* on "Meekness towards ourselves," which is one of the virtues treated of in the third part, he would never have us "vexed against ourselves or our own imperfections;" for, "as the reproofs of a father given sweetly and affectionately have far more power with the child to reclaim him than choler and anger, so, when our heart shall have done any fault, if we reprehend it with a quiet and sweet admonition, having more compassion of it than passion against it, and gently encouraging it to amendment, the repentance following thereupon will penetrate further, and strike deeper, than a vexing, angry, and storming repentance." Again, business is to be treated of with care, but without vexation and solicitude, after the model of "the holy angels,† who have care of our salvation, and procure it with diligence, yet are not solicitous or anxious, since that would be an interference with their blessedness. . . . Rivers, which glide peaceably through the valleys, bear great boats and rich merchandise; and the rain which falls gently in the open fields makes them fruitful in grass and corn; but torrents and rivers which run rapidly ruin the bordering country, and are unprofitable for traffic; as likewise the vehement and tempestuous rains furrow the fields and meadows. Never was work well done with too much violence and earnestness. 'We must hasten leisurely,' says the proverb. 'He that hastens too much,' says Solomon, 'is in danger of stumbling and bruising his feet.' We do our business soon enough, when we do it well. Drones make more noise and are more earnest than bees, but they make only wax and not honey. So they that spend themselves with a tormenting anxiety and an eager solicitude, never do much nor well." And in accordance with

* C, part iii. chap. ix. § 2, p. 303.

† C, part iii. chap. x. §§ 1 and 3, pp. 306-309.

the foregoing are the instructions which he gives for stilling our anger, "assembling* our forces not violently, but mildly, at the first touch we feel of it," and making "a meek resistance;" for, "as we see in courts of justice the ushers crying 'Silence!' make more noise than those whom they would silence, so it happens many times that by endeavouring with violence to suppress our choler, we stir up more trouble in our hearts than the choler would have done, and the heart thus troubled is no more master of itself."

Hence, too, from his conviction that everything approaching to unquietness of mind, all distraction, all over-eagerness and *empressement*, was a great hindrance to the spiritual life, sprang his exhortations to unity of effort, recommending "each one to select some particular spiritual exercise, or some special virtue, and to make it his particular pursuit."† "He used to say that all the saints have excelled in some particular grace, and that every religious order had some one as its ruling spirit, to be chiefly cultivated, although of course in no way excluding others."

And surely Francis, in representing peace of mind as so intimately bound up with our spiritual well-being and progress, has indeed lighted upon a great secret of holy living revealed to us in Holy Scripture, and applies it, and unfolds the properties of it, with much skill and appreciation of its efficacy. He hardly indeed develops in adequate proportions that rest of the soul which is purely *given* and in no sense *gained*,—the peace which flows, according to the foregoing context of that wonderful passage of St. Matthew's Gospel to which we have recently referred, from the revelation of the Father, which the Son makes to the soul by His teaching, His character, His work. He says too little of the "rest," which is

* C, part. iii. chap. viii. § 6, p. 297.

† E, part i. chap. ii. § 3, p. 17.

of pure grace; though not more than enough of that, which comes of grace co-operating with human endeavour.

But this is not the only adverse criticism which we have to make upon the moral theology of an author, who commends more winningly than almost any other the pleasantness and peace which are to be found in wisdom's ways. Like many a physician of the body, Francis is so enamoured of his one specific that he closes his eyes to those other principles and truths which form a balance to it in the moral and spiritual system of the Gospel, and serve to keep it in its place. We are saved the pain and distastefulness of adverting in any great detail to this feature of Francis's theology, because it is not by any means so apparent in the treatise now under review as in some of his recorded sayings, and indeed it may be said to exist in the 'Introduction' only in germ. But there can be no doubt that Bishop Martensen is correct in reckoning Francis of Sales* as virtually the originator of the doctrine called Quietism,—and as having sown the first seeds which, more than half a century after his death, bore antinomian fruit in the teaching of Molinos as to the indifference of human actions. Francis, not content with exhibiting, caricatured the truth that peace of mind is the secret of spiritual well-being and progress.

* The Bishop implies this by naming three representatives of Quietism, of which Francis is chronologically the first. His words are: "The great religious phenomenon which is known under the name of *Quietism* may be described as that partial view of life which sets it forth as the highest aim for personality to be freed from all motives, and only to be regulated by quietives. The soul here desires no longer to be set in motion, but exclusively to be brought to rest, to sink into peace, to cease to will. This system of thought appeared in a very peculiar form in the seventeenth cen-

tury, in connexion with the tenet of disinterested love to God. . . . Its representatives are *Molinos* (1642-97), *Franciscus von Sales* (1567-1622), *Francisca von Chantal*, and *Jeanne de la Motte-Guyon* (1648-1717). Fénelon felt himself drawn in sympathy to this school of thought, became its apologist, and subjected himself to a degree of martyrdom for it, without however on his own account drawing conclusions from its doctrines."—'Christian Ethics.' By H. Martensen, D.D., Bishop of Zealand. Translated by C. Spence. Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1873. P. 326, &c.

For this truth is cruelly caricatured, when it is taught, or implied, that the will should have actually no tendency or pursuit of its own; that it should not merely echo, but be absorbed in, the Divine will;* and that consequently the only legitimate prayer is a prayer, not of impetration, but of acquiescence †—that "Thy will be done" is not only the keynote of Prayer, but should drown every other note in Prayer's diapason. It is said to have been one of the spiritual maxims of Francis that "we should ask nothing and refuse nothing at God's hand." How such a maxim can be made to square with the precepts of Christ, "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;" "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," it is difficult to discern. God has indeed bidden us "be careful for nothing," but, so far from urging indifference as to the objects of human desire, He has expressly bidden us in everything to let our requests be made known to Him by prayer and supplication with thanks-

* "Francis said that directly a soul which has given itself up to God's good pleasure becomes conscious of any individual will in itself, it makes haste to extinguish it in God's Will, just as at sunrise you may see the light of the stars melt away, so to speak, into the brightness of the glorious sunshine."—E, part ii. chap. iv. § ii. p. 98.

† This resolution of all prayer into prayer of acquiescence finds a place in the theology of our day, where, however, it is no longer connected with Quietism, but is simply an erroneous inference from the apparent inviolability of natural laws. M. Émile Saisset expounds it in the ninth Meditation of his 'Essay on Religious Philosophy' (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1863), whereon the translator (understood to be the present Bishop of Derry) pertinently remarks: "M. Saisset's theory of prayer, in his ninth

Meditation, is equally unsatisfactory to the philosopher and to the Christian. The philosopher will perceive that it solves the problem of prayer, by quietly eviscerating it of its difficulty. The Christian will have more serious objections. M. Saisset makes two kinds of prayer, a higher and a lower—the lower of impetration, the higher of resignation; and he appears to merge the lower absolutely in the higher. The lower is a pardonable weakness—the higher is the heritage of maturity. . . . These views are too sublimated to be just. The Lord's Prayer at least contains the lower petition; 'Give us this day our daily bread,' as well as the higher, 'Thy will be done.' Without the former, the 'sublime familiarity of [prayer,' as M. Saisset calls it in a phrase which is itself sublime, will cease to exist, and the very idea of Providence be lost."—Vol ii., Essay by the Translator, pp. 218, 219.

giving. But Francis having opened this vein of thought, his followers, as always happens with great teachers, worked it much further and more mischievously than he himself had done, until in the teaching of Molinos (and even in some sayings of Madame Guyon)* the developement which it received shocked the *moral* sense of mankind almost as much as their *common* sense.† But having called attention to this weak point of the moral theology taught by Francis, we are not called upon to do more. Indeed it almost seems as if the having said so much as this needed apology, for it is quite possible that the extraordinary fervour and spirituality to

* Bishop Martensen refers to her saying that she can no longer pray, "Forgive us our sins," because she loves God in a perfect self-forgetfulness. The Bishop shows well the fundamentally false character of any such sentiment. And he proceeds thus: "In the acknowledgment by our Evangelical Church of justification by faith . . . we have the right point of junction, so as to avoid the mystic path of error. Accepting, appropriating, and grateful love to God in Christ, is *at once quietive and motive*. Or, if we express the matter from the objective side, God's mercy in Christ is at once the deepest ground of tranquillity and the deepest ground of action."—"Christian Ethics," p. 329.

† The doctrine of annihilating the human will by merging it in the Divine dates far earlier than Francis of Sales. It was the doctrine of Tauler and other mystics. In 'The Communication of Dr. *Thaulerus* with a poor Beggar,' subjoined to that translation of the 'Introduction' which we have followed in this paper, and which seems to have been drawn up by order of James II., it is brought out very strongly. The Doctor, having been directed by a voice from heaven to "a poor Beggar who had his feet filthy, foul, and all

naked, whose clothes were not worth a half penny," as one who would instruct him in the spiritual life, and having heard from him that he was never unhappy, or unfortunate, and "never had any ill morrow," because he had always learned to resign himself to God's will, then put this searching question to him, "But what would you say if God should damn you?" "If God would damn me?" said the poor man; "verily if he would use me so hardly, I have two arms to embrace; the one whereof is a profound humility, by the which I am united to his holy humanity; the other is love and charity, which joyns me to his Divinity, by which I would embrace him, in such sort that he should be constrain'd to descend with me into hell, and I had rather without comparison be in hell with God, than without him in Paradise." Of this, and similar words of Madame Guyon, it is enough to say that no such overwrought strains of devout sentiment are found in the words of Christ, or in the writings of the Prophets, Psalmists, and Apostles; and that philosophically any attempt to extirpate from our nature self-love, which is one of its most fundamental affections, must be an error, however piously designed.

which Francis himself evidently attained, and the extraordinarily high level of communion with God, on which he walked in his every-day life, may give an appearance of overwrought sentimentality to some of his words, simply because the reader is on a level so far below him. To adapt to the subject a simile* of his own, hens, which fly seldom and low, would have no right to criticise the gyrations of the eagle, as he wheels round and round in the golden light of the sun. Suffice it to say that, if there be anything either in the style or matter of his teaching defective (and of what uninspired teacher can we say that there is nothing?) the test for detecting, and the norm for correcting it, is supplied abundantly by the pure and perfect Word of God. St. Theresa's often-repeated ejaculation was, "All that is not God is naught." And we may say, after reading the counsels for holy living given us by eminent saints and servants of God: "All that is not God's Word has a flaw and a failure somewhere." The author would have said so himself, much more emphatically and feelingly than we can say it for him. Nevertheless this also is true, that such a spiritual work as we have reviewed confers upon every reader of it a high privilege, and a correspondingly high responsibility. The man must be either the victim of inveterate sectarian prejudice, or a stickler for the most vulgar theological commonplaces, or much worse than either, dead to all spiritual emotion, who can read Francis's treatise without a drawing of the heart towards its author, a longing after "The Devout Life" which he recommends, and a desire to act upon his instructions for leading it. Nor is there any reason whatever, save such as resides in the backwardness and sluggishness of our own wills, why we should not reach the high standard proposed in such works, even though in attempting it we should break down a thousand times. Nobody ever

* See C, part i. chap. i. § 5, pp. 4, 5.

did reach it by any wisdom, strength, courage, resolution, or other resource of his own. It was never reached but by the blood and grace of Jesus Christ enabling, giving life, and hope, and spiritual vigour, and a perfect willingness to do, to be, and to suffer, all that God would have us. That blood and grace are as operative of spiritual conquests in the nineteenth century as they have at any time shown themselves to be in the heart and in the history of man; and to us they are offered as freely and unreservedly as to any of those inheritors of our fallen nature who have become the most signal monuments of their efficacy.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

LECTURE IV.

BAXTER AND 'THE SAINT'S REST.'

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CONTENTS OF LECTURE IV.

Baxters' 'Saints' Rest' is a book of the same spontaneous birth as 'The Pilgrim's Progress' and 'The Imitation of Christ'—One of its faults is its diffuseness, and the process of abridgment it has undergone was necessary to adapt it for the many in whose hearts it has made itself a home—Baxter sometimes abuses his mastery in the art of distributing his materials—One formal merit the book possesses is its style; it exhibits pathos, earnestness, a robust and masculine eloquence, all no doubt elements of its abiding popularity.

The book was originally written for the author's own use—It is the utterance of one whose own life was one long familiarity with pain and suffering, and who yearned for rest—Baxter felt profoundly the religious divisions of England; he was essentially a man of peace; but his manner of writing brought him into conflict with everybody, and he signally failed in his attempts to reconcile and to pacify.

The motive and final cause of the book was the author's desire to become acquainted with and conversant in heaven—This is an explanation of the importance he attached to meditation, which he urges in it as a duty of God's own ordaining.

The good which a nearer acquaintance with the work may work is this: It brings the careless into contact with one who will plead with them as perhaps none ever pleaded with them before—This is most characteristic of the man and the book—For those who have already begun well, the book is a help to the setting forward of a higher life—It contains counsels of great excellence, and protests against mischievous exaggerations into which they might be in danger of falling—It initiates those who have yielded themselves to his guidance into the deeper mysteries of divine meditation, furnishing them with some of the materials on which the soul may work, and leading them to the contemplation of the glory of God.

BAXTER AND 'THE SAINT'S REST.'

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."—HEBREWS iv. 9.

I HAVE undertaken to speak to you this day of one, and of the most famous work of one, who at the time of his death stood outside of, and to a certain point in antagonism to, that Church, whereof most, if not all, of us here present have the privilege of being members. I am about to express my own sympathy, and to claim yours, for labours of his, as wrought for the common good, the spiritual profit of us all. For myself I need hardly say that there does not seem to me any inconsistency in this. I feel no embarrassment in regard of the position which I occupy; nor am I conscious that any explanation, still less that any apology, is needful from me. When brought into contact with those who stand outside of our own communion, be they the living or the dead, I make no pretence of believing that there are not differences, it may be important differences, between us; I do not hesitate to profess that I regard my own as the best; else how should I justify my cleaving to it? And further, I am persuaded that we do not hasten, but rather put further off, that blessed day when all who are Christ's shall be outwardly as well as inwardly one in Him,

by premature anticipations and snatchings at the same. To heal our divisions, so to heal them, I mean, that they shall not presently break out anew and prove more inveterate than ever, is almost a Pentecostal work. Whenever things are ripe for such a consummation, it will come as of itself; there will be no mistake about it; the dividing walls and separating barriers will fall away as of their own accord. Meanwhile, and having ever in view the hastening of the coming of such a day, there is a duty which is plainly ours, a duty at once negative and positive; a negative duty, that we do not accentuate, emphasize, exaggerate points of difference; a positive duty, that we heartily thank God for all which He has wrought *in* any of His Saints and servants, for the likeness to Christ which He has formed in them; and not less for all which He has accomplished *by* them; that we recognize this with no grudging recognition as a contribution thrown into the common stock of the Church, an addition to the wealth not of a section of it, but of the whole. It is this last duty, which it is my privilege and pleasure to be called to fulfil to-day. With Richard Baxter's Nonconformity, whether it was his fault, or the Church's fault, or nobody's fault, or everybody's fault, with this I have happily nothing this day to do. With these preliminary words I pass to my proper theme.

There are books which seem rather to write themselves, than to be written; which are as the medicinal gum that oozes from the tree, without constraint and almost without solicitation; books, of which the authors, if it were demanded of them why they wrote them, might with perfect truth reply, because they could not help it. Such I take very much 'The Pilgrim's Progress' to have been; and such 'The Imitation of Christ;' the literary purpose, the intention of composing a book, having altogether fallen into the background. Many passages make plain that Baxter's 'Saint's Rest' is a book of the same spontaneous birth; and I

much regret that in the shorter form, which is the only one for the most part in which we possess or read it, these passages have mainly or altogether been allowed to disappear. For indeed, as is needful for many reasons here to observe, the veritable work, as it came from Baxter's hands, has important points of unlikeness as compared with the little volume, which we give as a prize in our Sunday schools, and in other ways seek to disperse; and which in the case of many among us is probably all with which we ourselves are familiar. In mere bulk, the book as he wrote and published it is four or five times bigger than the little volume which we know; so that when this announces itself as "abridged," this announcement fails to convey, or conveys very inadequately, the fact of the extent to which it has been cut short; nay, I am obliged to add, cut short not always with understanding. Thus, to go no further than the title-page, we miss there the affecting and very instructive words as to the true meaning and primary purpose with which it was written, "Written by the Author for his own use, in the time of his languishing, when God took him off from all public employment." And we miss not less many allusions to the troublous times in which he lived and wrote, to Worcester, and Edgehill, and Naseby, to the pall of mourning which our Civil War had spread over the face of England; all of which had their use, served to give an historic basis to the book, and hindered it from floating as it were in the air. I would not here be misunderstood. The process of abridgement has been somewhat mercilessly, and at times somewhat clumsily executed; and yet under no other conditions could the book have made itself the home which it has made in the hearts of so many thousands in our land. Half is sometimes more than the whole; and this may be true of the fourth part as well. The book, as Baxter wrote it, is long; sometimes, if we were to venture to speak out all that is in our hearts, we should

acknowledge it is tedious ; above all in the earlier parts. It is only after a while that he extricates himself from straits and narrows, in which he has needlessly entangled himself there.

But now having ventured on this word of fault-finding, let me finish with the same ; and note certain defects and drawbacks, mostly formal, which, if I am not mistaken, cleave to it ; that so, this done, I may dismiss the subject, and proceed to trace, as I best may, what of excellent worth it offers to us. Baxter then, a master in the art of the distribution of his materials, with many of the merits of the Schoolmen whom he studied so closely, and with some of their faults, sometimes abuses this mastery ; pushes distinctions and divisions so far, multiplies them so wantonly, that not clearness, but confusion, is the result. His method is not his servant, but he the servant of his method. And as with the distribution of his materials, so also with his materials themselves. They accumulate beyond all reason under his hands. He is so full, with so vast a range of theological interests, so well versed in the controversies of his own time and of the times past, that it is only too easy for him to go off upon some side quest, if such offers itself to him, and to follow it up much further than is consistent with the main purpose or general symmetry of the work which he has actually in hand. Take a notable example of this from the book immediately before us. He has not advanced very far in his praise of the heavenly rest before it comes strongly home to him that the certainty of our inheriting this rest depends on the credibility of the Scriptures which promise it, on the fact that they are no other than the infallible word of God ; and hereupon he addresses himself to the whole question of the divine authority of Scripture, and generally of the Evidences of the Christian Religion, devoting more than one hundred and thirty closely printed pages to the subject. I need hardly say that with

occasional good points this treatise on Christian Evidences, for it is nothing less, is of comparatively little value now; although this by no fault of the writer. The battle which is of all the ages, that, I mean, of faith with unbelief, has within the last two hundred years, above all during the last twenty, so shifted its ground, that "the high places of the field," those, which being won or lost, do in fact determine the issues of the conflict, have ceased to be the same which in his time they were; nay the very foes are different, and different too is that for which *we* are contending. The Deist of the seventeenth century denied the *fact* of our having received a revelation from God; he never, so far as I know, denied the *possibility* of our receiving such a revelation. Then, and up to a recent date, we had not staked all upon the issue. Even if the battle had gone against us, something would have still remained; or at least we might have believed that something remained; a living personal extramundane God, governing the world in righteousness; a voice of conscience, His voice within us, attesting the everlasting distinctions between good and evil; the hope of immortality. These, with other things precious, men might still have counted their own. Now there is no room for any such belief; the conflict is for all which we have; for all which is human and all which is divine in man; and it is well that we should look this fact in the face.

And other avenues stretching away to the right hand and to the left, Baxter cannot always resist the temptation to explore; and this, though they may lead him far away from that which is his more immediate concern. Above all, let him only find himself in the neighbourhood of some perplexed question of the Schools, such a one as has tasked and divided the subtlest intellects of Christendom for centuries, which has set Thomist against Scotist, Realist against Nominalist, and is likely to do the same to the end of time;—for these controversies are not dead,

they have only a little shifted their ground;—and at once, like the war-horse of Job, he smells the battle afar off, “the thunder of the captains and the shouting,” and nothing will content him till he finds himself in their midst.

I have thus delivered myself freely in regard of certain drawbacks and faults from which this book cannot be affirmed to be free; and dealing, as I am thus far, mainly with things formal and external, let me mention here, before entering into deeper matters, one formal merit which it eminently possesses. I refer to that without which, I suppose, no book ever won a permanent place in the literature of a nation, and which I have no scruple in ascribing to it—I mean its style. A great admirer of Baxter has recently suggested a doubt whether he ever recast a sentence, or bestowed a thought on its rhythm, and the balance of its several parts; statements of his own make it tolerably certain that he did not. As a consequence he has none of those bravura passages which must have cost Jeremy Taylor, in his ‘Holy Living and Dying’ and elsewhere, so much of thought and pains, for such do not come of themselves, and unbidden, to the most accomplished masters of language. But for all this there reigns in Baxter’s writings, and not least in ‘The Saint’s Rest,’ a robust and masculine eloquence; nor do these want from time to time rare and unsought felicities of language, which, once heard, can scarcely be forgotten. In regard indeed of the choice of words the book might have been written yesterday. There is hardly one which has become obsolete; hardly one which has drifted away from the meaning which it has in his writings. This may not be a great matter; but it argues a rare insight, conscious or unconscious, into all which was truest, into all which was furthest removed from affectation and untruthfulness in the language, that after more than two hundred years so it should

be; and we may recognize here an element, not to be overlooked, of the abiding popularity of the book.

Having tarried thus long as in the outer court of the temple, let me now draw nearer to the heart of things. And first I will attempt to realize to myself and to you the conditions, outward and inward, under which this book was produced, the forces which contributed to its production; for these will have gone far to make it what it is. I remarked at the outset that the book was one of those which seem rather to write themselves than to be written. Let this, however, be as it may, so much at least stands fast, that it was originally composed for his own use—surely an invaluable condition for a book of practical divinity, that it should have been written to instruct, to comfort, to strengthen him from whom it came, and then, if it might be, others. We have his own account of the genesis of the book, the pearl and crown, as I take it, of all his books. Removed by sickness from all active exercise of his ministry, left solitary in a country-house, sentenced to death by the physicians, “I began,” he says, “to contemplate more seriously the everlasting rest which I apprehended myself to be just on the borders of. That my thoughts might not too much scatter in my meditation, I began to write something on the subject; but being continued long in weakness, where I had no books and no better employment, I followed on till it was enlarged to the bulk in which it is published.”

This then we note first about the book, and as helping to explain and account for its existence, namely, that it was the writing of one whose own life was a long familiarity with pain; not seldom a strong agony; who could take up with most literal truth the words of the great apostle, “In this tabernacle we groan.” No one would willingly read the catalogue which more than once he has given of all the diseases which laid

siege in his body to the citadel of life ; but certainly no one can read it without marvel that one with twenty mortal sicknesses on his head should have seen that suffering life prolonged for threescore and sixteen years. As little can any one read it without admiration for that continual triumph of the spirit over the flesh and over fleshly ills, which could alone have enabled him to crowd into years so preoccupied with pain such a vast amount of work for God. He makes no parade of these sufferings ; in this book only slightly alludes to them ; but the yearning of the sick after health, of the weary after rest, the sense of unease, of a vast weariness enfolding all things here, makes itself very distinctly felt in such passages as the following :—

“ Surely, a man would think, who looks upon the face of the world, that rest should to all men seem seasonable. Some of us are languishing under continual weakness, and groaning under most grievous pains, crying in the morning, would God it were evening, and in the evening would God it were morning, weary of going, weary of sitting, weary of standing, weary of lying, weary of eating, of speaking, of walking, weary of our very friends, weary of ourselves ; oh how oft hath this been mine own case, and is not rest yet seasonable ? Whither can you go ; or into what company can you come, where the voice of complaining doth not show that men live in a continual weariness ? But especially the saints, who are most weary of that which the world cannot feel. What godly society almost can you fall into, but you shall hear by their moans that somewhat aileth them ? Some weary of a blind mind, doubting concerning the way they walk in, unsettled in almost all their thoughts ; some weary of a hard heart, some of a proud, some of a passionate, and some of all these and much more. Some weary of their daily doubtings and fears concerning their spiritual estate, and some of the

want of spiritual joys, and some of the sense of God's wrath, and is not rest then seasonable?"

But, again, Baxter felt profoundly the religious divisions, if not of Christendom, yet certainly of England; and moreover, as he himself often confesses, there was a deep disappointment which mingled with his sense of these. That the openly profane should make war with all who would live godly, for this he was prepared; nothing else was to be expected. But it went to his heart, and he recurs to this with a sad iteration, that those professing godliness should scorn and defame, should bite and devour one another as they did. Some of us may have heard tell of a dying saint, who being reminded by his friends that he was passing into a world where the wicked cease from troubling, took up and completed the patriarch's words, adding, "Yes, and where the good cease from troubling too." Few have felt this troubling on the part of the good, or of those whom he esteemed good, more acutely than Baxter did. I am confident that I do not err in esteeming it one of the main burdens which made him yearn for that heavenly rest, where the wicked cannot, and where the good have no desire, to trouble any more.

Some will be surprised when I thus implicitly claim Baxter as a son of peace; some will be tempted to disallow this claim; remembering, as no doubt they will, that he certainly took no inconsiderable share in the theological fighting of his time. And no doubt, at a first glance, and as long as we dwell on the mere surface of things, it is not unnatural to regard him as a man of war, of strife and contention all his life long; fighting against everybody; fighting, as I need not tell you, against Papists, though counted by many Protestants as only half-hearted in this battle, and this because he would not teach that the further

from Rome the nearer to God ; fighting against the Prelatists or Bishops ; and then, when these had disappeared for a while from the scene, misliking many things in the Presbyterian rule which had succeeded ; at open war with the Independents, with the Fifth Monarchy Men, with the Anabaptists ; with the Libertines or Antinomians ; with the Quakers, not the sober quietists then that they are now ; with the Seekers, who counted that the kingdom of God was still to seek ; and with various minor sects, "some tolerable, some intolerable," so he describes them, which distracted the land ; his hand against all these ; and yet I am bound to say, with all this, never in my judgment fighting for mere fighting's sake ; but always fighting for peace. When he said, and they are words well worth remembering, "He that is not a son of peace is not a son of God," this was not merely a pointed epigrammatic saying which he was uttering, but a voice which came from the deep of his heart. And it is no more than due to him to add that as he yearned, so he laboured, for peace. There is something affecting, almost pathetic, in his entire confidence, a confidence which no experience seemed able to shake, that all men, if once shown they were in the wrong, would at once own that they were so, and without more ado would confess and forsake the errors of which they were convinced. In this conviction he was never weary of writing books with titles such as these : 'A Friendly Accommodation,' or again, 'Pacifying Principles,' or once more, 'Against Contentious and Church-distracting Controversies,' or yet once again, 'An End of Doctrinal Controversies by reconciling Explication.'

Whether his schemes of at-one-ment were in deed always reconciling and pacifying, may be fairly a question ; but in this indomitable faith of his that peace was attainable, and that for the attaining of this it only needed that men should be clearly made to see on which side the right lay, and

that it was possible to make them see this, I recognize a certain simplicity if you will ; but the grand simplicity of a man who ascribed to others the same intellectual and moral honesty, the same allegiance to the truth, or to what they believed to be the truth, which he found in himself.

I have said that it might very fairly be a question whether his schemes of pacification were such as were always likely either in manner or matter to be crowned with very signal success. And indeed, when we come to acquaint ourselves a little closer with them, it is not very wonderful if they failed. Here is one of his summonses to the "word-warriors"—this excellent phrase is of his own coining—to lay down their arms and to come to some understanding. It constitutes the title-page of his 'Catholic Theology,' and little as he may have intended this, it must be owned that every word of it is a provocation and a challenge. It is worth quoting, and with very slight omissions I quote it :

"Catholic Theology, plain, pure, peaceable ; for pacifying of the dogmatical word-warriors, who by contending about things unrevealed, or not understood, and by putting verbal differences for real, and their arbitrary notions for necessary sacred truths, deceived and deceiving, have long been the shame of the Christian religion, a scandal and hardening to unbelievers, the incendiaries, dividers and distracters of the Church, the subverters of their own souls, and those of their followers, calling them to a blind zeal and wrathful warfare against true piety, love and peace, and teaching them to censure, backbite, slander and prate against each other for things which they never understood."

Certainly it is not strange if these words exercised no eminently pacifying influence on those to whom they were

addressed; if he who wrote them had often to take up the words of the Psalmist: "I labour for peace, but when I speak to them thereof, they make them ready to battle." As I have said already, this dwelling in the tents of Kedar, this labouring for peace, but, whether by his own fault or the faults of others, labouring in vain, was another burden of his spirit, and one I am persuaded which mightily helped his longing for the true City of the Vision of Peace.

But if life had its disappointments, it had its dangers too; was full of these, of temptations innumerable. How should he not yearn to leave them for ever behind. Hear some words of his, and you will own that he took these temptations in earnest, that for him the conflict with them was not a mere beating of the air, or fighting with shadows :

"O the hourly dangers that we poor sinners walk in! Every sense is a snare, every member a snare, every mercy a snare, and every duty a snare to us. We can scarce open our eyes but we are in danger. If we behold them above us, we are in danger of envy. If we see sumptuous buildings, pleasant habitations, honour and riches, we are in danger to be drawn away with covetous desires; if the rags and beggary of others, we are in danger of self-applauding thoughts and unmercifulness. If we see beauty, it is a bait to lust; if deformity, to loathing and disdain. We can scarcely hear a word spoken, but contains to us matter of temptation. Have we comeliness and beauty, what fuel for pride! are we deformed, what an occasion of repining! Have we strength of reason and gifts of learning, oh how hard it is not to be puffed up, to seek ourselves, to hunt after applause, to mislike the simplicity of Christ. Are we unlearned, and of shallow heads and slender parts, how apt then to despise what we have not, and if conceitedness and pride do but strike in, to become a leading troubler of the

Church's peace under pretence of truth and holiness. Are we men of eminence, how hard to devote our power to His glory from whom we have received it. Are we inferior and subjects, how prone to grudge at others' pre-eminence, to bring all their actions to the bar of our incompetent judgment. Are we rich and not too much exalted; are we poor and not discontented. If we be sick, oh how impatient; if in health, how few and stupid our thoughts of eternity!"

But the author of 'The Saint's Rest' aims at something more than the disenchanting us from the love of this world, and from the minding of earthly things. This is but half, and the easiest half, of the task which he has set before him. "To despise earth," he has somewhere said, "is easy to me, but not so easy to be acquainted and conversant in heaven." This, as its name sufficiently declares, is the motive and final cause of the book—to assist and set forward, in himself first and then in others, this acquaintance with heaven, this conversation in heaven; to kindle, by meditation on heavenly things, above all of the heavenly rest, the cold affection towards these which he mourned in himself, which he saw too plainly in others; which who is there among us that does not feel in himself?

And here is indeed an explanation of the immense importance which he attached to meditation, of the prominence which he gave to it as a help, nay, almost as an exercise absolutely necessary for the strengthening and deepening of the spiritual life of the soul, with the most careful directions when and where and how this may be most profitably exercised, which he gives. Many, if I mistake not, are wont to regard this exercise of meditation with coldness and distrust, as a device for the promotion of a certain artificial piety and a transient excitement of the religious affections; much extolled and much practised in the Roman Catholic Church; and recently, with

other questionable helps to devotion, borrowed from it by a few among ourselves. There cannot, however, be a greater mistake than this. It needs but a very slight acquaintance with the best Puritan divinity of the seventeenth century, with such books as Gurnall's 'Christian Armour,' with Bates' treatise on this very matter, above all with the writings of Baxter, and this one first of all, to dissipate any such notion.

The fourth and concluding portion of 'The Saint's Rest,' nearly three hundred pages, and constituting almost an independent work—for it has its own title-page, its own preface, its own dedication—is devoted exclusively to the urging of this duty, which he describes as "the delightfulest task to the spirit, and the most tedious to the flesh, that ever men on earth were employed in." I must needs consider it the most precious portion of the whole book, indeed he himself announces that all which went before was but as a leading up to this. But he shall himself describe this section of his work: "a Directory," he calls it, "for the getting and keeping of the heart in heaven by the diligent practice of that excellent unknown duty of Heavenly Meditation; being the main thing intended by the author in the writing of this book, and to which all the rest is but subservient." And on meditation, not merely as a help to the heavenly life, but as one which none may lawfully forego, he often expresses himself very strongly, as thus:—"That meditation is a duty of God's ordering I never met with a man that would deny. It is in word confessed to be a duty by all, but by the constant neglect denied by most."

I have thus sought to trace very briefly the moral and spiritual factors, as they present themselves to me, which wrought together for the producing of this book; the leading objects and aims which the writer of it set before him. But what, some may say, to whom it is still an unknown land, or who to-day for the first time are skirting with me its outer-

most borders, what of special spiritual good may we hope to obtain by nearer acquaintance with it? First, then, let me say, If there should be any in this great assembly who, notwithstanding their presence among us here to-day, do yet in their heart of hearts think scorn of that pleasant land, are despisers of that heavenly rest to which he invites them, they, if they can be persuaded to a closer familiarity with it, will come into contact with one whom in other points they may judge of as they may; but this I dare affirm they will not be able to deny, that to him heaven was no sentimental dream, and hell no painted flame; with one who will plead with them as probably they never have been pleaded with before, lest a promise being left them of entering into that rest, they should fall short of it. For indeed I have sometimes thought that this *pathos*, this passionate earnestness, is the quality in Baxter wherein he is almost, if not altogether, without a peer. There have been others in other points his equals and his superiors. But I ask myself where I should find any other such pleading with souls, any other, "Why will ye die?" which does not fall short of his.

I could not leave this unsaid, without leaving unsaid that which is most characteristic of the man and of the book. But I do not dwell on it any further. It is of the book as a help to the setting forward of the higher life in them who have already begun well, that it is my task to speak. If you ask me what help to this you may expect to find in it, I will say in the first place, counsels of excellent good sense, as serviceable to-day as on the day upon which they were first uttered; protests against mischievous exaggerations, whether on the right hand or on the left, you will meet with in abundance. Thus what can be better than this against those who taught (there are some who teach so nowadays), that men not merely may know,

but *must* know the exact moment of their conversion, or have not been converted at all :

“I will not enquire whether thou remember the time or the order of these workings of the Spirit. There may be much uncertainty and mistake in that. But I desire thee to look into thy soul, and to see whether thou find such works [of the Spirit] wrought within thee. And then, if thou be sure they are there, the matter is not so great though thou know not when or how thou camest by them.”

Or here again on what I will venture to call the very small religious value of tears :

“Some soft and passionate natures may have tears at command, when one that is truly gracious hath none ; yet is this Christian with dry eyes more solidly apprehensive and deeply affected than the other is in the midst of his tears ; and the weeping hypocrite will be drawn to his sin again with a trifle, which the groaning Christian would not be lured to commit with crowns and kingdoms.”

Or once more, on the infinite and dangerous self-confidence so often to be seen in those who after long walking in darkness have suddenly caught a partial glimpse of the true light :

“The first new strange apparition of light doth so amaze them, they think they are in the third heavens, when they are but newly passed from the suburbs of hell ; and are presently as confident as if they knew all things, when they have not half light enough to acquaint them with their own ignorance.”

Certainly these are good ; and it would be easy to multiply them a hundredfold ; but there is more and better and higher behind. That pathos which I ascribed to Baxter just now does not manifest itself merely in those calls to the unconverted,

full as those are of an inward bleeding compassion. There are passages not a few toward the end of the book, strains of the most passionate devotion, in which he seeks to initiate such as have yielded themselves to his guidance into the deeper mysteries of divine meditation, to furnish them with some of the materials on which the soul may work, to lead them upward and onward, step by step, from strength to strength, from glory to glory, to the contemplation of the glory of God. Take, for example, this. He has spoken of some motives to love, and proceeds :

“But if yet thou feelest not thy love to work, lead thy heart further, and shew it yet more. Shew it the King of saints on the throne of his glory, who is the first and the last ; who liveth and was dead. Draw near and behold Him. Dost thou not hear his voice ? He that called Thomas to come near and to see the print of the nails, and to put his fingers into his wounds, He it is that calls to thee, Come near, and be not faithless but believing. Look well upon Him. Dost thou not know Him ? Why, it is He that brought thee up from the pit of hell, and purchased the advancement which thou must inherit for ever. And yet dost thou not know Him ? Why, his hands were pierced, his head was pierced, his side was pierced, his heart was pierced with the sting of thy sins, that by these marks thou mightest always know Him. Hast thou forgotten since He wounded Himself to cure thy wounds ; and let out his own blood to stop thy bleeding. If thou know Him not by the face, the voice, the hands, if thou know Him not by the tears and bloody sweat, yet look nearer thou mayest know Him by the heart.

“Hast thou forgotten the time when thou wast weeping, and He wiped the tears from thine eyes ? when thou wast bleeding, and He wiped the blood from thy soul ? when pricking cares and fears did grieve thee, and He did refresh thee and draw out the thorns ? Hast thou forgotten when thy folly did wound thy

soul, and the venomous guilt did seize upon thy heart; when He sucked forth the mortal poison from thy soul, though therewith He drew it into his own? Oh how often hath He found thee sitting weeping like Hagar, while thou gavest up thy state, thy friends, thy life, yea, thy soul for lost; and He opened to thee a well of consolation, and opened thine eyes also, that thou mightest see it. How oft hath He found thee in the posture of Elias, sitting down under the tree forlorn and solitary, and desiring rather to die than to live; and He hath spread thee a table of relief from heaven, and sent thee away refreshed, and encouraged to his work. How oft hath He found thee in such a passion as Jonas, in thy peevish frenzy aweary of thy life; and He hath not answered passion with passion, though He might indeed have done well to be angry, but hath mildly reasoned thee out of thy madness, and said, Dost thou well to be angry, and to repine against Me. How often hath He set thee on watching and praying and repenting and believing, and when He hath returned, hath found thee fast asleep, and yet He hath not taken thee at the worst, but instead of an angry aggravation of thy fault, He hath covered it over with the mantle of love, and prevented thy overmuch sorrow with a gentle excuse, The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. How oft hath He been traduced in his cause or name, and thou hast (like Peter) denied Him, at least by thy silence, while He hath stood in sight; yet all the revenge He hath taken hath been a heartmelting look, and a silent remembering thee of thy fault by his countenance."

And hear him once and only once more; as he rebukes with the same passionate earnestness those who, loving God, do not love Him better; who professing to seek, and in a sense seeking, a heavenly country, are yet unwilling to reach it, and to find themselves (all life's tempests past) in the Fair Havens of the eternal rest:

“Ah foolish, wretched soul, doth every prisoner groan for freedom? and every slave desire his jubilee? and every sick man long for health? and every hungry man for food, and dost thou alone abhor deliverance? Doth the seaman long to see the land? Doth the husbandman desire the harvest? and the traveller long to be at home? and the soldier long to win the field? And art thou loth to see thy labours finished? and to receive the end of thy faith? and to obtain the things for which thou livest? Are all thy sufferings only seeming? have thy griefs and groans been only dreams? If they were, yet methinks we should not be afraid of waking; fearful dreams are not delightful. Or is it not rather the world's delights that are all mere dreams and shadows? Is not all its glory as the light of a glow-worm, a wandering fire; yielding but small directing light and as little comforting heat in all our doubtful and sorrowful darkness? Or hath the world in these its latter days laid aside its ancient enmity? Is it become of late more kind? Who hath wrought this great change, and who hath made this reconciliation? Surely not the great Reconciler. He hath told us in the world we shall have trouble, and in Him only we shall have peace. We may reconcile ourselves to the world (at our peril), but it will never reconcile itself to us. Oh foolish unworthy soul, who hadst rather dwell in this land of darkness than be at rest with Christ; who hadst rather stay among the wolves, and daily suffer the scorpion's stings, than to praise the Lord with the Host of heaven! If thou didst well know what heaven is, and what earth is, it would not be so.”

And the same yearning which uttered itself in this book, the firstfruits of his pen, written before half his earthly pilgrimage was finished, abode with him in strength to the last. Richard Baxter is not generally known as a poet; but a small volume of 'Poetical Fragments,' so he calls them, is one of the hundred and forty books, great and small, which acknowledge him for

their author. One of these poems he calls his "Valediction," that also written at a time when he esteemed himself on the very borders of the heavenly country, though in fact some ten years more should elapse before that country was reached.

Let me cite as *my* valediction a few verses from this, as showing that age had not dulled his longing desire for the Heavenly rest; being such also as may fitly quicken our own desire after the same :—

"What is the time that's gone,
And what is that to come?
Is it not now as none?
The present stays not.
Time posteth, oh how fast,
Unwelcome death makes haste,
None can call back the past,
Judgement delays not.
Though God brings in the light,
Sinners awake not;
Because hell's out of sight,
They sin forsake not.

"Man walks in a vain shew;
They know, yet will not know,
Sit still, when they should go,
But run for shadows;
While they might taste and know
The living streams that flow,
And crop the flowers that grow,
In Christ's sweet meadows.
Life's better slept away
Than as they use it;
In sin and drunken play
Vain men abuse it.

"Is this the world men choose,
For which they heaven refuse,
And Christ and grace abuse,
And not receive it?
Shall I not guilty be
Of this in some degree,
If hence God would me free,
And I'd not leave it?
My soul, from Sodom fly,
Lest wrath there find thee;
Thy refuge rest is nigh,
Look not behind thee.

"There's none of this ado;
None of the hellish crew,
God's promise is most true,
 Boldly believe it.
My friends are gone before,
And I am near the shore,
My soul stands at the door;
 O Lord, receive it.
It trusts Christ and his merits;
 The dead He raises.
Join it with blessed Spirits,
 Who sing thy praises."

LECTURE V.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S 'CONFESSIONS.'

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[It may be well to mention that, with Mr. Strahan’s kind permission, free use has been made of an article contributed by the writer several years ago to the *Contemporary Review*. The passages cited from the ‘Confessions’ are sometimes translated by the preacher, and sometimes borrowed from the Oxford Translation.]

ST. AUGUSTINE'S 'CONFESSIONS.'

"When he came to himself."—ST. LUKE XV. 17.

ALMOST every commentator has pointed out in this expression an allusion to those who, after a period of mental alienation, return to a sound mind. Perhaps the most literal is the deepest and truest rendering—"Having entered into himself." He who knows what is in man describes that solemn moment in the life of a soul, when the heart first really recollects itself. "Remembrance," says a Jew, "is the twin-brother of Repentance." The heart—the inner being—is the sanctuary of God; to enter into ourselves is to meet God. In this sense, I can scarcely find a more fitting motto for the 'Confessions' of St. Augustine.

I.

There are few books which have presented attractions to so many different classes of readers as the 'Confessions.' In this, more than in any other among his voluminous productions, is reflected "that mixture of passion and gentleness, of authority and sympathy, of largeness of mind and logical rigour,"* which

* M. Guizot, in his admirable *rationale* of the Pelagian Controversy, 'Histoire de la Civilisation,' i. 180-189.

has given Augustine such rare influence in the Christian Church. The man of letters finds in it the first specimen of those revelations of an inner life which have an especial charm for the modern spirit. He recognises in it a style, unquestionably clouded by the false and affected rhetoric of a declining civilisation, yet rising at times into flights which human oratory has seldom outsoared: whose contorted antitheses are more than atoned for by touches of irresistible tenderness, and by those occasional utterances which become lodged in the memory of the human race—those one or two words engraven by the hand of genius upon the rock, which are better than a thousand written upon the sand. The psychologist who turns over the pages feels, perhaps, at first, some impatient contempt of the sighs and prayers which interrupt a scientific discussion. But he is surprised by some subtle piece of mental analysis, by speculations on Creation, Time, Eternity, Memory, which seem to anticipate not only Reid and Jouffroy, but even Kant and Descartes. The preacher who understands his art may find in the 'Confessions,' not, indeed, ready-made weapons for the nineteenth century, but materials which may be forged into weapons that will reach the soul of every man in every age. The greatest sacred orators have seldom appeared more original than when they were borrowing judiciously from the 'Confessions.'* The theologian of our own Church will discover in the book occasionally expressions—and occasionally something more than expressions—some of the unguarded rhetoric which was frozen into logic by succeeding generations, some of the tares that already began to grow rankly in the field of the Church—which may be more or less triumphantly quoted by the Roman Catholic contro-

* I may instance the use made by Massillon in his sermon, "Délai de la Conversion," of the passage:—"Retinebant nugæ nugarum et subcutiebant vestem meam carneam, et submur-

murabant: dimittisne nos? et a momento isto non erimus tecum ultra in æternum? et a momento isto non tibi licebit hoc et illud ultra in æternum?"—" 'Confess.' viii. 11.

versalist.* Yet he will discover also abundant indications of a theological system to which, as a whole, he may apply that which Gibbon has shrewdly observed of one portion of it—namely, that “it has been received with public applause and secret reluctance by the Latin Church.”† Still more may he trace the consistent lines of a method of which it is no exaggeration to say that with its lofty reverence for human reason and its deferential appeals to Holy Scripture, it is anti-Roman in its very substance.‡ Nor among the readers of this delightful volume are we to forget those whose approbation its author most valued, the men who give it a place among the books which they read before or after they have knelt in their Saviour’s presence, who feel in it, across the gulf of years, the very heart-pulse of its saintly author’s religious affections, who bless him for wise warnings and undying hopes. We may, I think, go even further than this. It is true of Augustine’s ‘Confessions’ more than of most uninspired books, *ea est quæ crescit cum parvulis*; it grows with our growth. Each age of human life finds in it a peculiar line of attraction. In youth it charms us by its delineation of passion, by those living sentences which vibrate as we touch them. But its psychology seems hopelessly obscure, its metaphysics hopelessly mystic, the whole mass of the composition destitute of those notches and marks for analytic measurement which are exacted by a student trained in our modern schools. Yet after

* E.g. the invention of the bodies of Protasius and Gervasius, x. 7, and the request for prayer for Patricius and Monica, ix. 13.

† Chapter xxxiii.

‡ Cardinal Perrone may have had the system and method of Augustine in view, rather than particular “texts,” when he said, “Otez à ceux de la religion cet Auteur, ils sont défaits, et n’ont plus rien.”—‘Perroniana,’ p. 100. An amusing passage follows, from

which it appears that it was the habit of French preachers to speak of Monseigneur Saint Paul, as in the first chapter, “De la Prognostication Panagrueline.” The other saints of the Roman calendar they treated only to Monsieur and Madame. “Monsieur d’O. said that those who in preaching talked of Monsieur Saint Augustine only proved that they were not familiar with that saint.”

we have not only studied other men's thoughts, but thought ourselves; after we have felt, and suffered, and doubted, there are rays which open up an avenue of light into the very heart of that which once appeared to us but a silver mist, and the intellect perceives substance where it suspected nothing but confusion. We may even say that these 'Confessions' have been almost equally appreciated by dogmatism and free-thought, by Christians and sceptics—by the latter, for the marks which they bear of having come from an age of doubt and distraction; by the former, for the passionate self-surrender from the days of the voice in the garden and the baptism at Milan. Those who dislike the journey love Augustine for his inimitable appreciation of the rest to which it brought him. Those who look upon the rest as a delusion are ready to proclaim that the journey was never traversed with a freer step, or described by a more opulent pencil.

II.

It is important for our present purpose to see with some exactness what we are to understand by the title of the book.

Augustine has answered it elsewhere. It has a double signification. *Confession* is the voice of *adoration* as well as *penitence*. This twofold acceptation gives its significance to the 'Confessions.' They stand alone. Others have written autobiographies, memoirs, religious lives; Augustine alone has written Confessions.*

But he holds his soliloquy in such tones that men also can hear,† "Why do I tell Thee so much? Not, surely, that Thou mayest know them by me, but I waken up new affections towards Thee, and the affections of those who read these

* "Et laudantis et gementis."—
'Enarrat.' Ps. xci.

† "Ego quoque, Domine, etiam sic

tibi confiteor, ut audient homines."—
'Confess.' x. 3.

things. I have spoken, and will speak on, and this I do from love of Thy love."* Charity urges him to this course; for he has been a Bishop of the Church for two years, and he hopes that his example will excite "the heart of some not to sleep in despair, and say I *cannot*, but rather to waken up in the love of Thy mercy, and in the sweetness of Thy grace." The curious ear of man is not, cannot be, at his heart.† But he will proclaim what he is. "With a consciousness, which is not doubtful, but certain and plenary, O Lord! I love Thee, Thou hast transfixed my heart with the arrow of Thy word, and I have loved Thee!"

The saintly Bishop had not lived so little in the world as to be ignorant of its ways. He knew that he was baring his breast to his own enemies, and those of the Church. The sobs which he uttered at the feet of Christ; the long cry in which he wailed out the sins and offences of his youth to his reconciled Father; the broken words of those short sentences which seem to set themselves to the mystic music of some penitential chant at the foot of an altar; he had allowed the world to hear them, and the world was not likely to let them drop.

Everyone is aware that Augustine, in his 'Confessions,' repeatedly touches upon that kind of sin, which every motive of moral prudence as well as of natural delicacy should lead ordinary people to conceal from others, or to confess with the most guarded generality. It is not only that between us and other men there is drawn a veil of flesh, through which God only has the right to look, and where the glance of a mortal eye inflames that wounded human modesty which remains in every nature that is not quite brutal. By such confessions we may injure our own souls, retouching the faded lines of dangerous pictures, regretting, it may be, that we have not sinned

* 'Confess.' xi. 1.

† "Auris eorum non est ad cor meum."—Ibid.

more, and that we have lost opportunities.* We may also do incalculable injury to others by unintentional suggestions. What shall we say of this element in Augustine's writing?

His example, in his public confession, stands out almost alone for profit and for wonder, not for imitation. He had never been a profligate in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Measured by the standard of the world even now, much more by that of the society in which he lived, he might have passed without much censure.† More unworthy still is the comparison which others have instituted between Rousseau and the young Augustine. At the very moment when two men are plunged in sensual sin, there may be a distinction between them. The one feels that he is plunged in a hell of filth, only less dreadful than the hell of fire. The other loves what "the degraded soul unworthily admires." He has a deliberate sympathy with his position, and with those who are like him.‡ He is perfectly satisfied, and thinks it is well for him to be here. One has fallen into the sty, the other lives in it. Of his guilty connection, Rousseau exclaims, "It stood me instead of all. The future did not touch me, or only as a prolonged present." But even in the first flush of youthful passion

* "Recordari volo transactas foeditates meas, et carnales corruptiones animæ meæ; non quod eas amem; sed ut amem te, Deus meus."—"Confess.' ii. 1; cf. iv. 1.

† Thus writes one of the highest authority upon Augustine:—"Talis erat, etiam quum ipse foris esset, ut ab eis qui erant intus, vir bonus haberi possit, in suo quidem genere. Adolescens habuit concubinam, quod humanæ permittunt leges. Hæc non repudiata sed erepta, adamavit alteram. Verum utrique servavit conjugii fidem, quam probitatem hodie non temere reperiās in sacerdotibus aut Abbatibus."—August. tom. i. (Basil. 1569). Erasmus

Alfonso Fonseca Archiep. Toletano. "In illis annis unam habebam, sed *unam* tamen, ei quoque servans tori fidem."—"Confess.' iv. 2. When she returned from Italy to Africa, vowing herself to a pure and single life, he formed, for a time, a second connection of the same nature, intended to be limited to the two years during which he was waiting for a wife (vi. 15). It is only right to notice the dark shadow which hangs over Augustine's youth from such expressions as those in 'Confess.' iii. 1, ii. 2.

‡ Οἷτινες οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσι τοῖς πρασσούσι.—Rom. i. 32.

Augustine exhausts all the energy of his imagination to find language which may give us a conception of his misery. "O my God! My mercy! with how much of gall, in how much goodness, didst Thou besprinkle that sweetness. In all my joy, I was bound with fetters of anguish, that I might be beaten with the burning iron rods of jealousy, suspicion, fear, anger, and discord."*

Correspondent to this difference between the men is the difference of their Confessions. No man ever read the earlier portion of Rousseau's without a permanent taint, or a permanent trial, to his soul. We feel that he took an artist's reflective pleasure in every line of the picture. It is the thoughtful and deliberate masterpiece of a corrupted imagination. On the contrary, no prurient persons ever said of Augustine as they have been known to say of certain in our own time, who make confessions in fashionable drawing-rooms, "Come and hear him. He is so charming, and has been so wicked, and will tell us all about it." In an age which must have excitement, people run after grotesque converts, to hear anecdotes from the life of some poor sinner, with the rouge scarcely washed from her faded face. Religious diaries are written, with a view to ultimate publication, by persons who occasionally look surreptitiously to see if any one is listening behind the half closed door. But here there is a coldness and a whiteness as of winter snow over the crater of the extinct volcano. There is a reserve in all that effusion. The style is without that affected periphrastic delicacy, which is so essentially indelicate. His heart might be ulcerated, and leave trailing drops of blood; † he is determined that no sentimental sighs shall be heaved over the parting-scene between his mistress and himself. The mother of his lost Adeodatus walks veiled

* 'Confess.' iii. 1.

† 'Confess.' vi. 15. See 'Essais de Littérature et de Morale,' par Saint-Marc

Girardin—"La périphrase est souvent plus indécente que le mot"—ii. 11. Art. "St. Augustin."

and spectral, a memory without a name, from her sixteen years of shame, into the presence of God, with a sigh of penitence and a prayer of hope. Among the most brutal lines that Byron ever degraded his marvellous genius by writing—it is saying much—are those in which he attributes to the 'Confessions' the power of awakening an envy of the youthful transgressions of the saintly bishop.*

III.

I proceed to attempt a sketch of the life of Augustine, so far as is necessary for understanding the 'Confessions.' This will be followed by more detailed reference to the most interesting passages in it.

i. He was born at Thagaste, in Numidia, on the 13th of November A.D. 354, his father's name Patricius, his mother's Monica. Shortly after the sixteenth year of his age, he fell into sin, lost his father, and was supported during his education at Carthage by his mother and a wealthy friend, named Romanianus. In the second year of his sojourn there, he became the father of Adeodatus. In the twentieth year of his age, he threw himself with all the fervour of his nature into Manichæism, and with the zeal of a neophyte sought to make proselytes from among his friends. His mother wept over his perversion, but never lost the hope of his return. At Thagaste, he taught grammar for a while, but shortly returned to Carthage, and acted as a teacher of rhetoric. In the course of the year 383, he is thoroughly convinced of the hollowness of Manichæism, but falls into academic scepticism. After many wanderings in an inextricable forest labyrinth, "nothing remained but to beseech Divine Providence to aid me, with many

* "Sermons he read, and lectures he endured,
And homilies, and lives of all the saints;
To Jerome and to Chrysostom inured,
He did not take such studies for restraints.
But how faith is acquired, and then insured,
So well not one of the aforesaid paints

As Saint Augustine in his fine Confessions,
Which make the reader *envy his transgressions*.

This, too, was a sealed book to little Juan."

a tearful and pathetic cry."* But before the crisis comes, ambition occupies his spirit for a while. He sails to Rome, and, after teaching rhetoric for a short time in that city, is sent at the public expense as an endowed Professor of Rhetoric to Milan. There the preaching of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, gives him *light*, but *strength* he has not yet. In his own words: "I did not want to be more certain *of* Thee, but more confirmed *in* Thee. The Saviour commended Himself to my judgment as the Way, but I shrank from walking through His narrowness. I had no answer to make to Thee, saying, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' And as Thou gavest me demonstration of the Truth from every side, I had no answer to make to my convictions, but slow and drowsy words, 'Presently, yes, presently; let me be for a while.' Ah! those *presentlies* never presented themselves; those *little whiles* lasted a long while."† Besides, he is unable to shake off the thralldom of sensuality. As in so many other cases, the reading of St. Paul's Epistles is greatly blessed to his soul, and at last he is definitely won to Christ by a text, as if by a voice from Heaven.

ii. Instead of attempting a meagre outline of the life of Augustine, let me refer to three of its leading scenes, at Carthage, at Milan, and at Ostia.

1. At Carthage.

To understand Augustine's writings in general, and more especially his 'Confessions,' we must know something of the Roman-African life of his day. The civilised life of Africa found its centre at Carthage—the Rome of Africa, as it was frequently called. It has been observed that we think of no other Carthage than that of Hannibal. But Carthage, from the period of its new foundation under Augustus (A.D. 29), was

* 'De Util. Cred.' c. viii.

† 'Confess.' viii. 1-5.

essentially a Roman city. Carthage was the child of Roman genius in its grandest hour. It was described as a most glorious city. Its streets, glittering with gold and gay with marbles, ran in long parallel lines. It possessed numerous schools, and affected to rival Rome as a creator of Latin literature.* The Latin-speaking African was—

“A Roman moulded by that sun and sea
Which lit and laved the infant Hannibal.”†

Among the sights of Carthage there was one of peculiar fascination to the susceptible boy. The spectacles of the Latin theatre in Carthage were numerous and splendid. They furnished fuel for the unquiet fire of his soul, scenes which haunted his imagination, and passages which he loved himself to declaim. The Christian Church, it need hardly be observed, abhorred the pagan theatre. The idolatrous rites, the lascivious attitudes, the gladiatorial shows, which were its inseparable accompaniments, were equally opposed to the dogmatic Monotheism, to the purity, and to the mercy, of the Gospel. The very fact of a man's habitual absence from the theatre afforded presumptive proof that he was a Christian.‡ In his ‘Confessions,’ Augustine goes more deeply to the root of the matter. Supposing obscenity and idolatry to be banished from the stage, and taking it at its best estate, are its effects morally wholesome? Is it good that the passive emotions should be excited, when no active exertion is intended to follow, when the very intensity of the emotion is a delicate luxury whose end is itself? Augustine seems to doubt it.

“In another, and that feigned and personated misery, that acting attracted me the most vehemently which drew tears from me. What marvel that, an unhappy sheep, straying from Thy flock, and impatient of Thy keeping, I became infected

* “*Duæ tantæ urbes Latinarum literarum artifices, Roma atque Carthago.*”—August. ‘*Epist. ad Dioscorum*,’ tom. ii. 257.

† ‘*Poems by Lord Houghton*,’ p. 286, “*Fall of Alypius.*”

‡ “*Spectacula non visitas.*”—‘*Mim. Fel. Octavius*,’ cap. ii.

with a foul disease? And hence the love of griefs; not such as should sink deep into me; for I loved not to suffer what I loved to look on; but such as upon hearing their fictions should lightly scratch the surface; upon which, as on envenomed nails, followed inflamed swelling, imposthumes, and a putrefied sore. My life being such, was it life, O my God?"*

He anticipates Bishop Butler and Dugald Stewart in tracing the injurious nature of the "refined and selfish luxury of the sensibility which terminates in imagination."

2. We turn to Milan for the scenes of his conversion and baptism. It were almost sacrilege to tell the story in other than his own words:—

"But when a deep consideration had from the secret bottom of my soul drawn together and heaped up all my misery in the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, bringing a mighty shower of tears. Which that I might pour forth wholly, in its natural expressions, I rose from Alypius: solitude was suggested to me as fitter for the business of weeping; so I retired so far that even his presence could not be a burden to me. Thus was it then with me, and he perceived something of it; for something I suppose I had spoken, wherein the tones of my voice appeared choked with weeping, and so had risen up. He then remained where we were sitting, most extremely astonished. I cast myself down I know not how, under a certain fig-tree, giving full vent to my tears; and the floods of mine eyes gushed out an acceptable sacrifice to Thee. I sent up these sorrowful words: 'How long—how long? To-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? why not is there this hour an end to my uncleanness?'

"So was I speaking, and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo! I heard from a neighbouring house a voice, as of boy or girl, I know not, chanting, and oft repeating, 'Take up and read; Take up and read.' Instantly my

* 'Confess.' iii. 2 (Oxford Translation).

countenance altered, I began to think most intently, whether children were wont in any kind of play to sing such words: nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So checking the torrent of my tears, I arose, interpreting it to be no other than a command from God, to open the book, and read the first chapter I should find. Eagerly then I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I laid the volume of the Apostle, when I arose thence. I seized, opened, and in silence read that section on which my eyes first fell: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh,'* in concupiscence. No further would I read; nor needed I: for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away."

The story passes on immediately to another scene at Milan, during the Holy Week of the same year. It was the memorable time when the Empress Justina, the mother of Valentinian, was persecuting Ambrose. To soothe the anxiety of the people, during their protracted watches, the church echoed with Psalms and Hymns, after the Oriental fashion. Among the voices of those who accepted with delight the beautiful innovation (innovations are not always grievances) was that of a woman, not old, but of venerable aspect, and of a young man, who stood near her in the throng. The name of the mother was Monica, the wife of a municipal magistrate of the petty town of Thagaste, in Numidia. Monica, indeed, had neither the rank nor the heroic achievements of the ladies spoken of by Tertullian and Jerome. She could never have worn a veil which cost 25,000 golden pieces, nor hung immense revenues from her ears. She was not one of those haughty matrons who had never seen the sea but from marble terraces at Ostia, or in a gilded trireme, who yet left

* Rom. xiii. 13, 14.

home with intrepid joy to spend long years in prayer and toil by the cradle at Bethlehem, or the sepulchre at Jerusalem.* Yet she had been a model of the common-place yet glorious duties of a wife and mother. Though no longer young, and of delicate constitution, she had faced the long and terrible passage from Africa to Italy. In a tempest, when the rude sailors were prostrate with fright, she cheered them with the assurance of safety, promised by God to her in a vision.† Her object was to rejoin this son, Aurelius Augustinus, a celebrated Professor of Rhetoric at Milan. Brought up in the Catholic faith, Augustine had been lured from it by the double seduction of the senses and the intellect. A terrible question weighed upon that inquisitive spirit, for which metaphysical problems produced more than the fascination of romance. The origin of evil, the kindred enigmas which troubled Job in the desert, and Solomon upon his throne; the imperfections of nature—the suffering that exists through creation under the reign of passionless laws—the sin that defiles every created soul; these insoluble mysteries would not allow his speculations to rest. The answers which the Church has to give, almost entirely practical and regulative, did not satisfy his metaphysical instincts. He was brought by circumstances into contact with the Manichæan heresy. The Persian Manes, professedly a Christian, taught that there were two uncreated, co-equal, co-eternal Principles, whose infinite struggles impress their character upon a chequered universe, and shoot their separate lines of light and darkness through the texture of existence. The language of Christian Theology was partly employed by this strange heresy. Augustine's heart was soothed by the specious retention of the sacred names of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. His intellect was won by the Pantheistic theory that God was an immense and lucid body, of which he was a par-

* Tertullian, 'De Virg.' ii. 1; St. Hieron. 'Epist. de Blesillâ.' See quotations in Nourisson, 'Phil. de St. Augustin,' ii. 436, 437.

† 'Confess.' vi. 1.

ticle,* and his conscience quieted by the convenient assurance that it is not our personality which sins, but a dark and undefinable subsistence which sins in us.† Let us not look upon such speculations as parts of an obsolete chapter in the history of human error. Mr. Mill, in his 'Autobiography,' tells us that while his father looked upon dogmatic atheism as absurd, "he found it impossible to believe that a world so full of evil was the work of an author combining Infinite Power with Perfect Righteousness. The Sabæan, or Manichæan, theory of a Good and an Evil Principle struggling against each other for the government of the Universe, he would not equally have condemned, and I have heard him express surprise that no one had revived it in our times."‡

Like some converts to the Church of Rome at the present day, Augustine made proselytes without having thoroughly convinced himself. His taste in preaching, as in other things, was for that which is solid and profound. He thirsted for the wine of truth, and the beauty or livery of the cup-bearer was nothing to him.§ He had longed to hear the great preacher of the Manichæans, Faustus; but he soon found that the great orator, who could say whatever he pleased, had little or nothing to say. Faustus had but a scanty stock—a few orations of Cicero, a very few books of Seneca, some poets, and the narrow literature of his own sect. However skilfully handled, not much could be made of such poor materials. Augustine soon knew at what price to value them. But when he hears Ambrose at Milan, he detects at once the ring of the true metal.

"To Milan I came, to Ambrose the Bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men, Thy devout servant; whose eloquent discourse did then plentifully dispense unto Thy people the flour of Thy wheat, the gladness of Thy oil, and the sober inebriation of Thy wine. And I listened dili-

* 'Confess.' iv. 16.

† 'Confess.' v. 10.

‡ Mill's 'Autobiography,' p. 40.

§ 'Confess.' v. 6.

gently to him preaching to the people, not with that intent I ought, but, as it were, trying his eloquence, whether it answered the fame thereof, or flowed fuller or lower than was reported; and I hung on his words attentively; but of the matter I was as a careless and scornful looker-on; and I was delighted with the sweetness of his discourse, more recondite, yet in manner less winning and harmonious, than that of Faustus."*

Of Ambrose, Monica had persuaded him to become the hearer. Much is said in this part of the 'Confessions' of a matter justly distasteful to us, the discovery of the relics of two martyrs, Gervasius and Protasius, whose bodies are said to be still lying under the High Altar of the Ambrosian Basilica at Milan.† Augustine mentions that a blind man was restored to sight. However that may have been, another miracle in the spiritual order was passing in the midst of these crowded scenes—the cessation of a spiritual blindness. At the moment when the intense heat and the absorbing business of the vintage naturally brought his vacation, the Public Professor of Rhetoric announced an indefinite suspension of his lectures. The excuse was failing health, the cause was the conversion of his soul to Christ. Some of us will remember the words of Pascal, traced upon a scrap of paper, and carefully kept to his dying day, sewed up in his clothes: "*Joie, pleurs de joie, renonciation totale et douce.*" Twelve centuries before, a cry, set upon the same note, but less reserved and restrained, rose from the soul of Augustine to the ear of Christ: "During those days I could not be satiated with a wondrous sweetness in considering the depth of Thy counsels for the salvation of man . . . How much did I weep in Thy Psalms and Hymns, being exceedingly moved by the sweet voices of Thy Church. The strains flowed into my ear, and the truth dropped into my heart, and holy

* 'Confess.' v. 13 (Oxford Translation).

† 'Calendarium Ambrosianum,' 1874, p. 22.

affections sprang up therefrom ; and sweet and abundant tears ran down, and it was well for me with them."*

The preaching of Ambrose was only one out of many causes working together to this blessed consummation. Sweet but broken fragments of the Gospel were always lingering in his memory. While yet a boy, in a dangerous illness, he called for Baptism with passionate entreaty ; it was put off for an exaggerated notion of the heinousness of post-baptismal sin.† "His yet tender heart," he tells us, "drank in the Saviour's name with his mother's milk, and kept it long and deep ; and whatever teaching lacked that name, however polished, adorned with culture, and even true, could not win his whole being."‡ The prayers and tears of his mother, the pleadings of his friends, the child's voice heard under the fig-tree, completed the work. On Holy Saturday, 387, Augustine, Alypius, Adeodatus (aged fifteen), went down into the font, still shown in the old Ambrosian Basilica. They were thrice plunged in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Then they passed across the church, in the white robes of their regeneration.

3. A few days more, and Augustine, Monica, Adeodatus, and their friends have travelled as far as Ostia, intending to embark for Africa, after resting from so long a journey.

Many here will probably recollect the appearance of Ostia—the desolate ruins by the yellow Tiber, shortly after passing from the trees and violet-tufted hedge-rows of the Campagna, over the vast marsh and by the salt-pits, looking to the sombre belts of pine by Castel Fusano. I know not whether any of us have associated that ruin, apparently of an inn or house of reception, close by the river, with the place where the travellers sojourned. At all events, somewhere on that once gay and busy but now melancholy spot stood Augustine and Monica, as

* 'Confess.' ix. 6.

† 'Confess.' i. 11.

‡ 'Confess.' iii. 4.

they have been represented by the pencil of Ary Scheffer, in the garden at Ostia, in sight of a sea lit up by a thousand fires, and under a sky without a cloud.* Let Augustine himself tell what none can tell as well.

"The day now approaching whereon she was to depart this life, it came to pass, Thyself, as I believe, by Thy secret ways so ordering it, that she and I stood alone, leaning in a certain window, which looked into the garden of the house where we now lay, at Ostia; where removed from the din of men, we were recruiting from the fatigues of a long journey, for the voyage. We were discoursing then together, alone, very sweetly; and 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,' † we were inquiring between ourselves in the presence of the Truth, which Thou art, of what sort the eternal life of the saints was to be, which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man.' ‡ But yet we gasped, with the mouth of our heart, after those heavenly streams of Thy fountain, 'the fountain of life,' § which is with Thee; that being bedewed thence according to our capacity, we might in some sort meditate upon so high a mystery."

"We were saying then: If to any the tumult of the flesh were hushed; hushed the images of earth, and waters, and air; hushed also the poles of heaven, yea the very soul be hushed to herself, and by not thinking on self surmount self; hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations, every tongue and every sign, and whatsoever exists only in transition, since if any could hear, all these say, 'We made not ourselves, but He made us that abideth for ever'—if then having uttered this, they too should be hushed, having roused only our ears to Him who made them, and He alone speak, not by them, but by Himself,

* Here, and in the pages immediately preceding, my memory is haunted by the eloquence of M. de Broglie.

† Phil. iii. 13.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

§ Ps. xxxvi. 9.

that we may hear His Word, not through any tongue of flesh, nor Angel's voice, nor sound of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, but might hear Whom in these things we love, might hear His Very Self without these;—could this be continued on, and other visions of kind far unlike be withdrawn, and this one ravish, and absorb, and wrap up its beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might be for ever like that one moment of understanding which now we sighed after; were not this, 'Enter into thy Master's joy'?* And when shall that be? When 'we shall all rise again,' though we 'shall not all be changed'?†

"Such things was I speaking, and even if not in this very manner, and these same words, yet, Lord, Thou knowest, that in that day when we were speaking of these things, and this world with all its delights became, as we spake, contemptible to us, my mother said, 'Son, for mine own part I have no further delight in anything in this life. What I do here any longer, and to what end I am here, I know not, now that my hopes in this world are accomplished. One thing there was, for which I desired to linger for a while in this life, that I might see thee a Catholic Christian before I died. My God hath done this for me more abundantly, that I should now see thee withal, despising earthly happiness, become His servant: what do I here?'

"What answer I made her unto these things, I remember not. For scarce five days after, or not much more, she fell sick of a fever; and in that sickness one day she fell into a swoon, and was for a while withdrawn from these visible things. We hastened round her; but she was soon brought back to her senses; and looking on me and my brother standing by her, said to us inquiringly, 'Where was I?' And then looking fixedly on us, with grief amazed; 'Here,' saith she, 'shall you

* Matt. xxv. 21.

† 1 Cor. xv. 51, Vulg. &c.

bury your mother.' I held my peace and refrained weeping; but my brother spake something, wishing for her, as the happier lot, that she might die, not in a strange place, but in her own land. Whereat, she with anxious look, checking him with her eyes, for that he still 'savoured such things,' and then looking upon me; 'Behold,' saith she, 'what he saith: ' and soon after to us both, 'Lay,' she saith, 'this body anywhere; let not the care for that any way disquiet you: this only I request, that you would remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be.' And having delivered this sentiment in what words she could, she held her peace, being exercised by her growing sickness."

"I heard afterwards also, that when we were now at Ostia, she with a mother's confidence, when I was absent, one day discoursed with certain of my friends about the contempt of this life, and the blessing of death: and when they were amazed at such courage which Thou hadst given to a woman, and asked, 'Whether she were not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city?' she replied, 'Nothing is far to God; nor was it to be feared lest at the end of the world He should not recognise whence He were to raise me up.' On the ninth day then of her sickness, and the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the three-and-thirtieth of mine, was that religious and holy soul freed from the body."*

IV.

I shall now proceed to say in conclusion why this book is especially valuable.

1. It appears to me to be especially worthy of study by educated young men. I would venture to hope that a copy of it in the original may sometimes be packed up in the knapsack for a Swiss or Highland excursion. I may point out *three* characteristics which seem to make it worthy of such a distinction.

The extraordinary felicity of its occasional sentences. All

* 'Confess.' ix. 10, 11 (Oxford Translation).

minor blemishes are more than redeemed by the exquisitely subtle tenderness and thoughtfulness peculiar to himself. The misfortune of provincialism was not in his case an altogether unmixed evil. The African style was evidently characterised by bold, incisive phrases. Under that burning sky the Latin language seemed to lose something of its massiveness, and to acquire, in return, a speculative subtlety.

The pages of the 'Confessions' are full of sentences which bear the same relation to the spiritual life as some of Shakespeare's sentences to general human life; such as these: "Thou hast made the heart for Thyself, and it is restless even until it finds rest in Thee;" "Thine omnipotence is not far from us, when we are far from Thee."

2. Leibnitz has accused the philosophical speculation of Augustine as having less of light than of heat and impetuosity.* Yet I will venture to recommend the study of the passages in the 'Confessions' upon Time and Memory as pieces of metaphysical speculation and mental analysis worthy of Kant or Maine de Risan. But better than any positive result of his speculations is that fresh admiration for the glories and depths of man's nature. A passage in his chapter on Memory shows us that he anticipated the subtle beauty of Shelley's lines—

"Odours, when sweet violets die,
Live within the memory."

"These things I do within, in the vast hall of my memory;" and then he exclaims, "And men go to admire the heights of the mountains, and the starry heaven, and the billows of the sea, and *leave themselves!*"

I may cite one other passage as an instance of the way in which mental observation is brought to bear upon the spiritual life.

* 'Confess,' xi. 11-28; x. 8-24.

"Yea, so far prevails the illusion of the image, in my soul and in my flesh, that, when asleep, false visions persuade to that which, when waking, the true cannot. Am I not then myself, O Lord my God? And yet there is so much difference betwixt myself and myself, within that moment wherein I pass from waking to sleeping, or return from sleeping to waking! Where is reason then, which, awake, resisteth such suggestions? And should the things themselves be urged on it, it remaineth unshaken. Is it clasped up with the eyes? is it lulled asleep with the senses of the body? And whence is it that often even in sleep we resist, and mindful of our purpose, and abiding most chastely in it, yield no assent to such enticements? And yet so much difference there is, that when it happeneth otherwise, upon waking we return to peace of conscience: and by this very difference discover that we did not what yet we be sorry that in some way it was done in us.

"Art Thou not mighty, God Almighty, so as to 'heal all the diseases of my soul,'* and by Thy more abundant grace to quench even the impure motions of my sleep! Thou wilt increase, Lord, Thy gifts more and more in me, that my soul may follow me to Thee, disentangled from the birdlime of concupiscence. For that nothing of this sort should have, over the pure affections even of a sleeper, the very least influence, not even such as a thought would restrain,—to work this, not only during life, but even at my present age, is not hard for the Almighty, Who art 'able to do above all that we ask or think.'† But what I yet am in this kind of my evil, have I confessed unto my good Lord, 'rejoicing or trembling,'‡ in that which Thou hast given me, and bemoaning that wherein I am still imperfect; hoping, that Thou wilt perfect Thy mercies in me, even to perfect peace, which my outward and inward man shall have with Thee, when 'death shall be swallowed up in victory.'§

* Ps. ciii. 3.

† Eph. iii. 20.

‡ Ps. ii. 11.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 54.

"How many people," it has been well asked by M. Ferraz, "are there even among those who are called pious whom their religious scruples and a noble care for their spiritual improvement have led to such profound self-searching? The observations of the psychologist are happily blended with the penitent's examination of conscience." *

3. Very interesting and instructive will it be found by the class of students to whom I have referred to trace Augustine's judgment upon classical antiquity.

In an age like that in which he lived, it is evident that classical literature must have been estimated differently, not only by different minds, but by the same minds from different points of view.

Augustine's mature and definite judgment on heathen philosophy is not difficult to gather, in spite of some apparent inconsistencies of expression. The Gospel did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. Nor did it come to destroy the crude fruit of human wisdom, but to form and mellow it. He never grounded faith upon an universal scepticism. Opposed as Aristotle and Plato might seem to be, he believed that one consistent mass had been strained out by the cautious wisdom of successive ages. Of Cicero and Plato he speaks with almost unvarying respect. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? In the wonderful providence of God, the first little flame of Divine love had been kindled in his heart by them, though the odour and the blaze were from the unguents of Holy Scripture.† To the 'Hortensius' of Cicero he owed the first prelude to his

* Ferraz, 'Psychol. de S. Augustin.'

† This is his language to Romanianus, "Nunquam cessavimus inhiantes in philosophiam. . . . Nondum aderat ea flamma, quæ summa nos arreptura erat, cum ecce tibi libri quidam pleni bonas res Arabicas ubi exhalant in

nos, ubi illi flammulæ instillarunt pretiosissimi unguenti guttas paucissimas, incredibile, Romaniane, incredibile, et ultra quod fortasse de me, et tu credis, etiam mihi ipso de meipso incredibile incendium concitarunt."—'C. Acad.' lib. ii. 2, tom. i. 425.

conversion, the first initiation into those high problems which are the intellectual principles of the spiritual life.

Augustine was a predestined Platonist. Indeed, as the mediæval Christian thinkers were of the school of Aristotle, so the earlier Christian thinkers were of the school of Plato. "Whatever is said in Plato lives in Augustine."

Turning from philosophy to literature, we find that Augustine had scruples as to his fondness for Terence and Virgil. In reference to Terence, this can easily be accounted for. Indeed, his very connection with the stage was a strong objection to him in Augustine's judgment. He could not forget the voluptuous excitement throbbing in the very air, the sanguinary fascination of the Circus, which he details with so masterly a touch in the case of the fall of Alypius. The spirit of that incident; the way in which the young man, "audacious rather than strong," drinks in delirious inebriation as the blood of the gladiator flows upon the arena of the Colosseum, is powerfully reproduced by Lord Houghton:—

"Two natures separate as sun and snow,
Battling to death to make a Roman show.
'Habet—Hoc habet—Habet!' rose a cry:
As if the Circus were one mighty mouth,
Invading the deep vale of quiet sky
With avalanche melted in the summer drouth.
Articulate tumult from old earth upborne,
Delight and ire and ecstasy and scorn."*

Even in reference to Terence, he will not accuse the words, which are elect and precious vessels, but the wine of devils which we are given to quaff in them.†

His severity towards Virgil has an exaggerated sound. But it is not the invective of the bigoted who cannot understand, nor the antipathy of the frigid, who cannot feel. It is the

* 'Confess.' vi. 8. 'Poems by Lord Houghton,' 260, 261.

† 'Confess.' i. 16.

sensitiveness of a penitent heart, trembling at the recollection of its passions.

Wherever the Latin language was spoken, the writings of Virgil had acquired a kind of popularity which seems at first sight unaccountable. It requires culture to appreciate such exquisite finish, such curious felicity. Yet lines of Virgil are scrawled on the poorest tombs among the Catacombs, and scratched upon the walls of Pompeii by the hands of the lowest of the people. We may find the explanation partly in that pathetic tenderness which, as has been well said, makes Virgil the first of the moderns. The people excuse refinement when it is pathetic. They pardon the finish of the line when they can still see that it is written by one whose eyes were moistened with a tear. To this peculiarity of Virgil's genius, no more delicate tribute has ever been paid than the sweet and burning tears shed by the passionate and imaginative boy, and for which the bishop so bitterly reproached himself, "Tantillus puer et tantus peccator." To estimate fully the enchantment which Virgil exercised over Augustine, we must turn to those treatises of his which fill up a gap in the 'Confessions.' After his memorable conversion, and resignation of his professorship, his friend Verecundus kindly lent him his villa at Cassiciacum.* There he retired for some months to prepare himself for his baptism, accompanied by Monica, by the son whom he was so soon to lose, and by a select circle of African friends. There, in the evening generally, after their letters were written, and the superintendence of the farm completed for the day, the party discussed philosophical questions. A singular freedom and toleration breathed through the conferences of these delightful days. Cassiciacum† was situated in a country of

* 'Confess.' ix. 3.

† Local tradition identifies Cassiciacum with Cassago, a village about eight leagues north-east of Milan. The oldest

authority for this is, however, a note in a parish registry, stating, *memoriæ proditum esse*, that Augustine had sojourned in the place. Manzoni gives

lakes and hills, upon the first stage of the Alps on the side of Lombardy. In that fair spot, "full of the serenity of the Italian sky, and the verdure of the valleys of Switzerland," the time passed away in a quiet and uneventful happiness. In the narrative of these months at Cassiciacum, Virgil is repeatedly mentioned. Upon the lower Alpine slopes—

"Beneath them spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair"—

in the meadow-lawn of the farm of Verecundus, during one of those summer days which seem to give light and clearness to the intellect, as well as to the eye, or in the soft winter sunshine, the cadence of Virgil's lines seems to mingle with the household cares of the little group, with Monica's gentle housework, and the lowing of the oxen.* In our age of business and distraction, we are tempted to ask with the poet—

"What shelter to grow ripe is ours,
What leisure to grow wise?"

strong etymological reasons against the substitution of *ago* for *iacum*. Besides this, the view from Cassago is common-place, and by no means agrees with Augustine's indications. On the contrary, *Casciago*, another Lombard town, in the opinion of Manzoni and Cossa presents no etymological objection. "It is situated on a prominence at the foot of a group of hills. On its western horizon is Monte Rosa, and the line of the Alps to their junction with the Apennines. To the south-east, a vast opening in which sight is lost; to the east and north-east, the mountains of Bergamasqui and of the Lake of Como; within this magnificent framework, a part of the Lago Maggiore, four other small lakes nearer; further off, the entire plain, like the hills, sowed with villas, towns, and villages, several of which at least must

have existed in the time of Augustine." Another circumstance is mentioned of much importance in deciding the question. At Casciago there is a little torrent which is frequently dry, but which has enough water in autumn to justify the "*silicibus irruens*" of Augustine, and which in one place is pent up between two rocks, so as to admit of being described as "*angustiis canalis intertrusa*." There is also a small valley falling off into a slope, and covered with a meadow, which agrees exactly with the words, "*ad pratium descendere*," in "*pratuli propinqua descendere*." But at Cassago, there is no running water at any season. See Manzoni's letter to M. Poujoulat upon the locality of Cassiciacum.

* "*Disputare cœperamus solo jam in occasum declinante, diesque pœnè totus cum in rebus rusticis ordinandis*

We feel that—

“Too fast we live, too much are tried,
Too harassed to attain”

the “sweet calm” or “luminous clearness” of the thinkers of old. We cannot help envying Augustine his seclusion at Cassiciacum. Yet let us remember that it was redeemed afterwards by toils that ended with one of the busiest of human lives. To him, at least, the retreat was not one of idleness. He wished deliberately to place his knowledge upon a certain basis, to understand as well as believe, to reconcile faith with reason, and that in him which thought with that which prayed. Like Butler at twenty-one, Augustine at thirty-three, “proposed the search after truth as the business of his life.” In his own beautiful language, he called upon his soul to “gaze attentively, where the dawn of truth begins to pale and whiten on the horizon.”* After many years, the rest and perfume of those months were still fresh in the old man’s memory. He says, in words that bring before us a picture of green fields and forms stretched under sheltering olives, “Thou, O faithful Promiser, givest to Verecundus for that farm of his at Cassi-

tum in recensione primi libri Virgilii peractus fuit.”—‘Acad.’ lib. i. tom. i. 418. “Interpositis pauculis diebus venit Alypius, et exorto sole clarissimo invitat cœli nitor, et quantum in illis locis hyeme poterat, blandula temperies, in pratum descendere.”—‘De Ordine,’ lib. ii. *ibid.* 471. “Tertius autem dies matutinas nubes, quæ nos coegerant in balneum, dissipavit, tempusque pomeridianum candidissimum reddidisset.”—‘De Beatâ Vitâ,’ *ibid.* 504. “Septem fere diebus in disputando fuimus otiosi, cum tres tantum Virgilii libros post primum recenseremus.”—‘C. Acad.’ lib. ii. *ibid.* 425. “Quo tamen opere Licentius in poeticum studium sic inflammabatur, ut aliquantum mihi etiam

reprimendus videretur. Tandem tamen ad retractandam quam distuleramus de Academicis quæstionem, cum a me, quantum potui, lumen philosophiæ laudaretur, non invitus accessit. Et forte dies ita serenus effulserat, ut nulli prorsus rei magis quam serenandis animis nostris congruere videretur. . . . Maturius itaque solito lectos reliquimus paululumque cum rusticis egimus quod tempus urgebat.”—‘C. Acad.’ ii. *ibid.* 426. “Ire cœperam in balneas. Ille enim locus cum cœlo tristi in agro esse minime poteramus, aptus ad disputandum et familiaris fuit.”—‘De Ordine,’ lib. i. 8, *ibid.* 467.

* “Attende, ubi *albescit veritas*.”—‘Confess.’ xi. 27.

ciacum, where we rested in Thee, from the fierce summer-tide of the world, the pleasant greenery of Thy Paradise, since Thou hast forgiven him his earthly sins in Thy mountain." But the quiet work of their mornings must soon be over. Before the evening falls, they must lift up their minds to the great problems, that tower before our existence and theirs, like the Alpine heights on which they looked at sunset. It must pass away in a few weeks. From the day of his baptism to that hot day in August 430, forty-two years off, when in mortal sickness and deep anxiety for his Church and country, the last great man of Africa must lie down in the little chamber at Hippo, with the sounds of the war cries of the besieging Vandals ringing in his ears, he can never know rest again, until the thinker's brain is quiet, and the worker's hand is still. In that day, his eyes will not be fixed upon the pages of Virgil, but upon the penitential Psalms hung before his eyes on the wall opposite to his humble bed. Yet at times, in that busy and holy life, the most musical words which he has heard upon earth, will fall upon the ear of memory, while he is listening most intently to catch the strains that come from the city of God.*

V.

I cannot close these thoughts upon the 'Confessions' without drawing from them, however briefly, lessons deeper and more personal than these. There are parts of this beautiful book which will sound somewhat startling in ordinary Protestant ears.† I say this, with a deep conviction that the

* M. Saisset has pointed out a curious Virgilian reminiscence in 'De Civ. D.' xiv. 27—"Ut sine auctoris illecebroso stimulo infundente gremio uxoris." Cf. *Æneid*, viii. 406: "Conjugis infusus gremio." Another such re-

miniscence may be cited—the reference to Dares and Entellus in his letter to Jerome, tom. ii. 'Epist.' 68. See also his letter to Maximus, 'Epist.' 44; and 'Confess.' viii. 2.

† See 'Confess.' ix. 7; ix. 13; ix. 11.

main lines of it are drawn upon the same platform as our own, and that it suits the spirit of our Church much more than that of the Church of Rome, or of those who occupy the opposite extreme. It could not have been written by one who looked upon the Bishop of Rome as an infallible guide ; who regarded the Mother of our Lord as the mediatrix and channel of grace—among all these prayers and burning sighs, there is not one to her ; who considered that faith could only be obtained by that melancholy process of the suicide of reason. On the other hand, it is written by one for whom Holy Baptism is the laver of regeneration ; for whom the Holy Eucharist is a commemorative sacrifice ; for whom the Church is a divine organisation, and sectarianism a misfortune or a sin. Three great lessons which we may draw from it are these :—

1. Entire loyalty to, and enthusiastic admiration of, the Holy Scriptures.

It so happens that two great Christian Fathers of the Latin Church have left us their testimony on this matter. St. Jerome, in his earlier study of the Old Testament, felt constrained to compare the flowing eloquence, the point, the gravity, the softness, of one or other of the great Roman orators with the uncouth alphabet of the Hebrews, and the words that sound as if the speaker panted or hissed.* Augustine tells us that in his pride he “resolved to study the Scriptures, that he might see of what sort they were ;” and his conclusion was that “it was unworthy to be compared with the majesty of Tully.”† But the written word is like the Incarnate Word. Outwardly, when we shall see it, it hath no form or comeliness ; but when we see it in the light of God, we exclaim, “Fairer than the children of men !” And Jerome, as he looked down the vista of law and prophets, saw broader spaces and richer light than he had beheld

* St. Hieron. ‘Epist.’ cxxv. 12. See De Broglie, ‘Histoire,’ &c. part iii. tom. ii. 265.

† ‘Confess.’ ii. 5.

beneath the skies of Athens or of Rome. And Augustine hailed the Scripture as "his chaste joy, honeyed with Heaven's honey and luminous with its light."

The 'Confessions' are full of this love of the Bible. May we learn to cry with Augustine, "Wondrous is the depth of Thine oracles, the very surface of which, as it lies open before us, is so winning to Christ's little ones—wondrous is the depth, my God, wondrous the depth. There is fear in entering into it, but it is the fear of honour, and the trembling of love."*

2. A second great lesson which stands out from the 'Confessions,' is the nature of true Repentance.

We are in danger between two opposite errors.

There are those who underrate or ignore it. They forget that the Baptist, our Lord, and His apostle, on the day of Pentecost, alike began with the call to repentance; they teach, or almost teach, a *salvation without repentance*. Others lay too much stress upon repentance, viewed merely as the working of our own mind, forgetting that Jesus has been exalted to *give* repentance and remission of sins; they represent the state of penitence as one long night, scarcely lighted by a ray of hope, and utterly without joy; they almost teach *repentance without salvation*.

But this book, while it is a penitential book, is yet a record of the joys of Penitence. In this respect, it is the most Evangelical of books, and we cannot doubt that it is greatly blessed to thousands of souls in the communion of the Church of Rome, which so unjustifiably darkens the pathways of God's penitent children. The respectable Pharisaism of formal religion, the elder brother spirit that is in most of us, views it occasionally with some suspicion. "Thou too," exclaims Augustine, "O loving Father! rejoicest more over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons

* 'Confess.' xii. 14.

that need no repentance. And we, too, hear with joy unspeakable when we hear on what exulting shoulders the shepherd carries home the lost sheep; and how the piece of money is restored to Thy treasure, with exultation of the woman's neighbours; and the joy of the solemnity of Thy house makes tears dash out when it is read concerning Thy younger son, 'For he was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' All things are full of witnesses, crying out, 'So is it.' The conquering commander triumpheth; yet had he not conquered, unless he had fought; and the more peril there was in the battle, so much the more joy is there in the triumph. The storm tosses the sailors, threatens shipwreck; all wax pale at approaching death; sky and sea are calmed, and they are exceeding joyed, as having been exceeding afraid."

"Everywhere the greater joy is ushered in by the greater pain. What means this, O Lord my God, whereas Thou art everlastingly joy to Thyself, and some things around Thee evermore rejoice in Thee? What means this, that this portion of things thus ebbs and flows alternately displeased and reconciled? Is this their allotted measure? Is this all Thou hast assigned to them, whereas from the highest heavens to the lowest earth, from the beginning of the world to the end of ages, from the angel to the worm, from the first motion to the last, Thou settest each in its place, and realisest each in their season, everything good after its kind? Woe is me! how high art Thou in the highest, and how deep in the deepest! and Thou never departest, and we scarcely return to Thee." *

Let him who would have the most vivid of all commentaries upon the abiding joys of an abiding penitence, upon the difference between the repentance of love and the repentance of fear, read and meditate upon the 'Confessions.' There are times, if he listens, when he will begin to see that the tears of

* 'Confess.' viii. 3.

penitents are the wine of angels, and hear the great deep swellings of the heavenly songs.

3. I close with a still greater thought which may be drawn from the 'Confessions' than even the supreme excellence of Scripture, or the solemn joy of Repentance. I mean, the glory, the beauty, the fulness, the sufficiency, of Jesus.

How clearly does Augustine see that the difference between our righteousness and Christ's—between the righteousness which justifies, and the righteousness which is wrought in us by justification—is as great as that between the creature and the Creator,* the finite and the Infinite! How sweetly does he call sinners to Christ! How fully does he preach, not this or that fragment of the Gospel, but the whole Gospel! "There is no rest where you are seeking it. Seek indeed what you are seeking, happiness; but it is not there where you are searching. You are looking for a blessed life in the region and shadow of death. It is not there. How can there be a blessed life when there is no true life at all? And here our very life descended, and bore our death, and slew it out of the overflowing abundance of His life; and called aloud to us to return from hence to that secret place from whence He came forth to us; first into that Virgin's womb, where the human creation, our mortal flesh, was knit and wedded to Him, that it might not be for ever mortal. And thence like a bridegroom coming forth out of his chamber, He rejoiced as a giant to run His course. For He lingered not, but ran; crying aloud to us by His words, by His work, by His life, by His death, by His descent, by His ascent, crying aloud that we should return to Him. And He departed from our eyes, that we might enter into our hearts, and find Him there. For He departed, and, lo! He is here."† How grandly does He base our redemption, not on questionable theories of the mode in which

* 'Confess.' xii. 15.

† 'Confess.' iv. 12 (Oxford Translation).

the Atonement is effectual; not on the agony of our self-appropriation; not on the favourable judgment which we pass upon our own case; not on the answer which we give to the questions, "Are you saved?" "Have you found peace?" but on the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"But the true Mediator, whom in Thy secret mercy Thou hast showed to the humble, and sentest, that by His example also they might learn that same humility; that 'Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus,' appeared betwixt mortal sinners and the immortal Just One; mortal with men, just with God: that because the wages of righteousness is life and peace, He might by a righteousness conjoined with God, make void that death of sinners, now made righteous, which He willed to have in common with them. Hence He was showed forth to holy men of old; that so they, through faith in His Passion to come, as we through faith of it passed, might be saved. For as Man, He was a Mediator; but as the Word He was not in the middle between God and man, because equal to God, and God with God, and together one God.

"How hast Thou loved us, good Father, who 'sparedst not Thine only Son, but deliveredst Him up for us ungodly'! How hast Thou loved us, for whom, 'He that thought it no robbery to be equal with Thee was made subject even to the death of the cross,' He alone 'free among the dead, having power to lay down his life, and power to take it again;' for us to Thee both Victor and Victim, and therefore Victor because the Victim; for us to Thee Priest and Sacrifice, and therefore Priest because the Sacrifice; making us to Thee, of servants, sons, by being born of Thee, and serving us. Well then is my hope strong in Him, that Thou 'wilt heal all my infirmities,' by Him who 'sitteth at Thy right hand and maketh intercession for us;' else might I despair. For many and great are mine infirmities, many they are and great; but Thy medicine is of ample efficacy. We might have thought Thy Word

remote from all conflict with man, and despair of ourselves, unless that Word were made flesh, and dwelt among us."*

Supreme and unclouded, above all, remains his conviction that for himself and for other human souls Jesus is sufficient. It has been said by some that Augustine's conception of love is too physical and sensual; by others that his conception of religion is too metaphysical and speculative. Perhaps this is hinted in a beautiful legend of the middle ages. One in vision was rapt into Paradise. Among the elect before the Lamb, he missed Augustine from the great throng. On asking, an angel said, "He is not here; he is in the highest Heaven. He is before the eternal Trinity, meditating and discoursing for ever of the great mystery."†

Be it so. Yet there are some among us who are twining round themselves chains which seem to be of flowers, but which they will find to be of iron or of adamant. There are others who have lived in the air of modern thought, until the faith of their youth has faded away like a dream. The 'Confessions' are full of the intense conviction of one of the most sensitive and thoughtful of men, that over all the terrible fascination of passion, and in all the more terrible fascination of thought, there is VICTORY through Christ, and REST in Christ.

* 'Confess.' x. 43 (Oxford Translation).

† The 'Golden Legend,' quoted by Nourisson, 'Philosophie de St. Augustin,' tom. i. 320.

LECTURE VI.

JEREMY TAYLOR'S

'HOLY LIVING AND DYING.'

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CONTENTS OF LECTURE VI.

The 'Holy Living and Dying' the earliest and best devotional manual produced in our Church since the Reformation—The supply of such works scarcely commensurate with the need of them—The immediate success and continued popularity of this book; its value; its interest as an expression of the character of the author; the events and scenes of his life up to the time of his composing it.

The 'Holy Living;' written to supply the want of religious worship and teaching when the public and private ministrations of the clergy were suppressed—Its method stated, considered, and exemplified.

The 'Holy Dying;' its occasion, scope, and object—Particular passages quoted, and commented on.

The style of the book—Taylor's fertility of illustration—He refers chiefly to ancient authors; with

advantage on the whole, but with occasional tendency to overrate the importance of such authorities—Examples of this tendency: (1) His citation of the precept contained in the 'Golden Verses' of Pythagoras; the history of this precept, as traced by a recent French writer (*Note*). (2) Reference to the Roman practice of suicide—Illustrations from Nature—The devotions at the end of each chapter.

The 'Holy Dying,' a guide for the healthy as well as for the sick; in some respects supplementary to the 'Holy Living;' e.g. in the treatment of the duty of repentance, to which we are impelled not merely by the motives of hope and fear, the hope of heaven and the fear of perdition (as is stated in the 'Holy Living'), but also, and mainly (as is shown in the 'Holy Dying'), by the motive of love.

Conclusion.

JEREMY TAYLOR'S

'HOLY LIVING AND DYING.'

"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord."—ROMANS xiv. 8.

THE Aids to devotion which have been treated of in the previous discourses were produced either in foreign Churches or amongst our non-conforming brethren at home. Inferior to none of these in beauty and usefulness is the treatise of which I have to speak; the work of our own Jeremy Taylor, the Chrysostom, as he has been called, of the English Church. The 'Holy Living and Dying' forms but a small part of his voluminous writings; nor would he himself have rested upon it his chief claim to the gratitude of posterity; yet it is the book by which, on account of its universal and permanent interest, he is now best remembered by the world in general.

Exactly a hundred years elapsed between the first promulgation of the Prayer-Book for public worship and the appearance of this, our earliest manual of private devotion. Each of the two books was called forth by a great national emergency; and though the work of Taylor can lay claim neither to the authority nor to the veneration which attach to the Book of

Common Prayer, it is still, after two centuries, the most complete, the most suggestive, and the most delightful book of the kind that we can put into the hands of our people.

The Prayer-Book has ever been the revered companion of the English Churchman in his private devotions, as well as in public worship. With its variety of prayers, exhortations, and selections from Scripture (including the whole of the Psalms of David) it goes far to supply the spiritual wants of our daily life. But many of us, consciously or unconsciously, have need of something more, need of such personal and particular guidance as we cannot expect to find in a manual framed, like the Prayer-Book, only with a view to its public use.

How it was that neither the divines of the Reformation nor their immediate successors provided for the religion of the closet and the sick chamber, we can readily understand, when we call to mind the circumstances in which they were placed. Being engaged in a double conflict, with Rome on the one side, and with Puritanism on the other, breathing an atmosphere of controversy, they gave themselves chiefly to exposition of doctrine, to interpretation of Scripture, and to preaching. From that age of polemical ferment there has come down to us a wealth of sermons, dogmatical treatises, meditations and commentaries on the Bible, many of which, like the secular literature of the same period, are even more highly valued at the present day than they were by the generation to whom they were addressed. The attention alike of clergy and laity was engrossed by questions of vital importance affecting the doctrine and discipline of the Church; and it is no wonder if the unobtrusive yearnings for comfort of the sick, the sorrowing, the penitent, the faint-hearted, were little noticed amid the louder din of theological strife; while the abuses of the Confessional, still freshly remembered, would cause a reaction unfavourable to any attempt that might be made to direct the conscience by rule and system, either in books or in personal conference.

Nor was this a merely transient consequence of the great

struggle of the Reformation. The causes which originally gave a didactic and controversial character to our Anglican theology have continued in operation, with varying force, almost to the present time. Not unworthy to be compared for learning and eloquence with any of the Churches of Christendom, the English Church has been less conspicuous, has indeed been somewhat wanting, in devotional works of the highest order; and many of her most attached members have consequently had recourse to religious guides extraneous to her communion, such as the elaborate allegory of John Bunyan, the artless effusions of Richard Baxter, or the monastic fervours of Thomas à Kempis.

The 'Holy Living and Dying' is obviously not addressed to the unlearned and ignorant: and it speaks well both for the culture and for the religious earnestness of the latter half of the seventeenth century that such a book should have passed through so many as nineteen editions within little more than fifty years after its publication.* That it met with immediate acceptance was due not wholly to its intrinsic merits, great as they are, but in part to the opportuneness of its appearance, to the pressing nature of the want which it supplied. But the reputation which it so speedily acquired it never lost. That it was highly esteemed by the courtiers of the reign of Queen Anne, may be inferred from the presentation of a copy of it to the Queen by her haughty favourite the Duchess of Marlborough, as well as from the testimony of Lord Shaftesbury, who says that the devotional works of Bishop Taylor held in his time "a conspicuous place, not only in the study of the divine, but in the glass cupboard of the lady's closet." Later in the eighteenth century there is a still more noble proof of the good influence of this book in the acknowledgment of John Wesley, that when the 'Imitatio Christi' had repelled him by its asceticism, he was led by the perusal of the 'Holy Living

* The 19th edition is dated 1701.

and Dying' to dedicate all his life, even "all his thoughts, words, and actions," to the service of God. In the present century, which has witnessed so great a revival of devotional religion, it needed not the encomium which the poet Coleridge bestowed on its author to bring it into more general use.*

Many of you, brethren, I doubt not, have acquired by the help of this book the habit of holy meditation; meaning by meditation an active, reflective, assimilative habit of mind, very different from the passive, aimless, listless reverie with which even religious people, if they are not guided to something better, are apt to be content. You have learnt to question yourselves strictly without fear or favour, to discern what you have in you both of good and evil, to make the utmost of the good gifts which you possess, to watch and resist each low selfish motive, to interweave with the tissue of secular thoughts the wholesome chastening remembrance that as you now have to "live unto God," so you have to "die unto God," that you may live unto Him again and for ever. This book has been with you on your sick bed, with you in travel, with you in days of sorrow or loneliness. Few can have read it even once, without laying to heart some of the wise counsels and solemn warnings with which it abounds: and if you will keep it by you, next to your holy books, as a companion of your inner life, not trusting to it absolutely, but using it intelligently and with discernment, I cannot but think you will gain more benefit than you would find in the discursive perusal of a variety of religious manuals; and there will be instilled into you by degrees something of the author's pious, earnest, sweet, cheerful spirit.

You have not now to learn the value of this book: but it will be further endeared to you, if you can feel that it reflects to you the character of the author; if, as you read, you can

* Strickland's 'Lives of the Queens of England,' vol. xii. p. 263; Lord Shaftesbury's 'Characteristics,' vol. iii.

Misc. v. 3; Southey's 'Life of Wesley,' p. 31; Coleridge's Preface to 'Sibylline Leaves.'

carry along with you the assurance that you have in it the work of no mere theorist, or visionary, or professional advocate, retailing the wisdom of others, offering you armour which he has never proved himself, but of one who, having been lifted up for a short time into great prosperity, was plunged into adversity and visited with sorrow upon sorrow, of one who, if we could have known him as a friend, would have taught us even better things by his life than he tells us in his book.

Jeremy Taylor stands out as a representative man of his age; the highest example of its eloquence and learning, and no mean exponent of its poetical spirit and earnestness of purpose. By his steadfast adherence to the cause which he espoused, he showed himself a worthy descendant of Rowland Taylor, the Hadleigh martyr; and he several times suffered imprisonment for his unwavering loyalty to his Church and King. In all his troubles he seems to have possessed his soul in peace, and to have been capable of labouring as assiduously amid the turmoil of the camp as within the peaceful quadrangle of his college.

He was born in 1613, the son of a barber or barber-surgeon in the town of Cambridge.* The family had been for many generations landowners in Gloucestershire, and were reduced to honourable poverty by the confiscation of their estate, which was bestowed on Bishop Gardiner after the martyrdom of the brave and learned rector of Hadleigh. The father had sufficient learning, as the son informs us, to "ground his children in grammar and the mathematics;" and he may have perceived some early signs of his son's future greatness when he entered him at Caius College in the University as a "poor scholar," at the age of thirteen. In his academical career the

* The materials of this sketch are derived chiefly from Bishop Heber's 'Life of Taylor' (vol. i. of Eden's edition of Taylor's Works, 1854), and Mr.

Willmott's charming biography, entitled, 'Bishop Jeremy Taylor, his Predecessors, Contemporaries, and Successors,' 1847.

young Jeremy was the contemporary, we would fain believe him to have been the friend, of John Milton. Though in after-life a wide gulph was interposed between the poet and the divine, the one becoming secretary to the Protector, the other chaplain to the King, at this time they might be friendly opponents in the dreary exercises of the schools; they might well be companions in lighter and more congenial studies; they might go up to the house of God together; they might be compared for their poetical temperament, for their love of ancient learning, for the beauty of their souls, and for their outward comeliness.

Though ordained while he wanted two years of the canonical age of twenty-three, Taylor quickly became famous for his eloquence in the pulpit. His hearers, in their enthusiasm, likened him, it is said, to some young angel newly descended from the realms of glory. The youthful preacher was soon brought to the notice of Laud, at that time Bishop of London, who made him his chaplain, and caused him to remove to the sister University, where he was elected to a fellowship at All Souls'. Higher marks of favour followed; and before he was twenty-four years old, if the received chronology of his life is to be depended on, he was Rector of Uppingham and chaplain to Charles I. The intimate relation into which he was thus brought with Charles continued to the last, and affected the whole tenor of his life. And the precious keepsake which he received from his royal master, the king's own watch and seals, was not improbably before his eyes, when he wrote the striking chapter of the 'Holy Dying' in which he speaks of the "throbs and little beatings of the watch," and exhorts us "not to forget our time, and to let none of it pass undiscerned; for if we were minute and curious in spending our time, as St. Ambrose and St. Augustine were, we should have no reason to complain of the shortness of our life; it would seem to be very long."*

* 'H. D.' i. 3.

The bright morning of Taylor's life was quickly overcast, though the promise which it gave was fulfilled not the less abundantly for the storm which followed. The parish in which his pastoral experience was gained, the occasional retirement at Oxford, so congenial to his studious disposition, the place at Court, which was the means of his becoming acquainted with some of the high and noble persons of the realm, the softening influences of the home and the family, all, before they had been enjoyed for five years, were taken from him. His wife died; the rebellion broke out; he showed his dutiful attachment to the royal cause by following the army, while by publishing his defence of episcopacy he proclaimed himself the uncompromising champion of the Church: and for this double offence he was ejected by the Parliament from his living, and roughly deprived of all his worldly goods.

The Church at that time struggled for her existence as she never has struggled in England either before or since. Several of her most eminent divines, Taylor, Pearson, Chillingworth in the number, joined the army. The exhortations of the preacher were enforced by comparisons freshly drawn from the siege and the battlefield; and in the 'Holy Living and Dying,' as well as in the sermons of Taylor, we find the marks of his familiarity both with the glorious and the distressing aspects of the soldier's life. He himself had a share in the untoward chances of war; but his misfortune turned to his advantage; and he probably has his own case in view when he speaks in this book of Zeno the Stoic escaping from shipwreck with the loss of all his goods, retiring "to the studies of philosophy, to his short cloak and severe life, and giving thanks to God for his prosperous mischance." * Taylor was taken prisoner at the siege of Cardigan: but falling into the hands of "noble enemies," as he gratefully terms them, he was released and permitted to find a new home at Llanfihangel, in the beautiful vale of the Towey, where he maintained

himself by teaching. The old Greek adage, "Either he is dead or he keepeth school," might then have been applied to him, as it was wittily applied by his friend Thomas Fuller to others of the royalist clergy, who were reduced soon afterwards to the like necessity.*

He was now hidden from the world; and in his seclusion he solaced himself with the study of that holy book which has a strain of sympathy for every earthly sorrow and for every heavenward aspiration, the Book of Psalms: he also took part in an edition of the Psalter, which was published in the name of his friend, Lord Hatton. And though he was "without books," he says, "except so many as a man may carry on horseback," he composed the great work which places him among the foremost advocates of toleration, 'The Liberty of Prophesying;' in which he proposed that the field of controversy should be narrowed, and the limits of comprehension enlarged, by the adoption of the Apostles' Creed as the standard of evangelical truth; so that any doctrine not therein contained should not be regarded as an essential part of the faith of a Christian: an opinion in which, as has been observed, he was preceded by Erasmus.†

The eleven or twelve years which he passed in the retirement of the Welsh village were probably the happiest period of his chequered life. How cheerfully he took his reverse of fortune, we learn from what he says of himself, by way of example to us, in the chapter of the 'Holy Living' in which he treats of Contentedness: "I am fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators; and they have taken all from me. What now? Let me look about me. They have left me sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife" (for he had married again), "many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me: and I can still discourse, and unless I list, they have not taken away my merry

* *Η τέθηκεν ἢ διδάσκει γράμματα. See Bailey's 'Life of Fuller,' p. 598.

† Milman's 'Life of Erasmus,' p. 137.

countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience: they have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the Gospel, and my hopes of heaven, *and my charity to them too*. I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields, and see the variety of natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights, that is, in wisdom and virtue, in the whole creation, and in God Himself. And he that hath so many causes of joy is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, if he loses all these pleasures and chooses to sit down on his own little handful of thorns."*

Among the compassionate friends to whom he here alludes was his neighbour, Lord Carbery, of Golden Grove, whose kindness and hospitality were largely shown to him, and were gratefully acknowledged in the dedications prefixed to the 'Holy Living and Dying.' Another and still more valuable friend was the learned and pious John Evelyn, who for many years assisted him in his necessities. Evelyn was drawn to him by the sturdy spirit which induced him even in his retirement to publish an attack on the Puritan divines, whereby he subjected himself to a second short imprisonment. The intimacy which sprang from this untoward circumstance was continued in an affectionate and interesting correspondence, much of which is preserved in Evelyn's 'Memoirs,' and from which we learn that Evelyn had the highest regard and veneration for Taylor, taking a journey from his country-house to hear him preach whenever he came to London, consulting him on spiritual matters, and speaking of him as his "ghostly father."† Such a friendship, so constant, so confidential, producing such reciprocity of benefits, is a rare and rich blessing; and to those on whom it is bestowed, it may make amends for many a "little handful of thorns."

When we read in the passage just quoted of his "walking in

* 'H. L.' ii. 6.

† Evelyn's 'Memoirs,' ii. 101.

his neighbour's pleasant fields," we are reminded that till within the present century his memory was preserved in Wales by a tradition similar to that which was attached to the names of Bishop Ridley at Cambridge and Addison at Oxford. An avenue in which he was wont to pace up and down, and meditate, was called after him, "Jeremy Taylor's Walk."

These few particulars of his life may enable us in some measure to imagine what he was in personal character and outward circumstances at the time when he wrote the 'Holy Living and Dying.' It is only needful to add that at the Restoration his services and sufferings in the cause of royalty were not forgotten: after holding for a short time a lectureship at Lisburn, in Ireland, he was appointed in 1661 to the see of Down and Connor; and there, in the midst of his labours, he was taken to his rest in his fifty-fifth year, closing, we may well believe, a holy and exemplary life by a holy and blessed death.

We come now to speak of his book, one of the best products of that time of trouble, when, as he complains in his dedication, "Religion was no longer seen in her appointed places" (for all the offices of the Church had been suppressed), "but was inscribed on the banners of armies; when God was worshipped, not as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, but as the Lord of Hosts."

The book was published in two parts, now commonly bound up together. The purpose of the 'Holy Living' was "to supply to the few good people who still remained a collection of holy precepts, which might make them less feel the want of personal guidance; since they would not always have a prophet at their needs, nor be suffered to go up to the house of the Lord to inquire of the appointed oracles." Seldom does it happen that a book, called forth like this by an occasional want, is found to be a possession for all time.

The 'Holy Living' is founded on the law of Nature or Right Reason, and proceeds on a method suggested by the saying of the Apostle, that "we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."* Accordingly those virtues and duties are presented first which may be evolved from the moral sense or conscience without the aid of Revelation; and afterwards those which are specially enforced (if not newly inculcated) by the Christian religion in the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles. I. Under Sobriety are placed the personal qualities of temperance, chastity, humility, modesty, and contentedness. II. Righteousness includes all duties, whether civil, social, or domestic, which arise out of our relations with other men. III. Godliness, properly so called, the godliness of the Christian, consists of faith, hope, and charity; charity or love toward God disposing us to obey, worship, and praise Him, charity or love toward man showing itself forth in works of mercy and almsgiving for God's sake.

The propriety of this arrangement may, perhaps, be called in question. Would it not have been better, we may ask, at least for the purpose of this book, to have inverted the order of the apostolic precept, and to have begun with godliness, after the example of the General Confession in our Daily Service, in which we pray "that we may hereafter lead a godly, righteous, and sober life"? It might have been expected in a devotional work that every duty and every virtue would be made to rest on the revealed word of God, and that the law of Nature or Reason would be appealed to only as a witness to that supreme authority. Be this as it may, the method which has been adopted by Taylor is neither illogical nor unscriptural; and it has been followed in our own time by an eminent writer on Christian morals, the late Dr. Whewell.†

Another observation is to be made on the general plan of the

* Tit. ii. 12.

† See Whewell's 'Elements of Morality.'

book. Taylor describes in glowing words the loveliness, the blessedness of virtue; but he has not left us to suppose that his pictures will transfer themselves to our hearts and will there become realities by our fondly gazing and musing upon them. The fruit of the Spirit, he tells us, will not ripen in our bosom without persistent care and watchfulness on our part. He never ceases to represent the Christian life as a spiritual conflict. Side by side with each grace which goes to make up the saintly character, he sets the antagonisms which are opposed to it, and the difficulties which obstruct us in the practice of it; he supplies rules both for exercising the grace and for subduing the contrary sin. Thus, after speaking of the duty of prayer, he prescribes the remedies for that "tediousness of spirit" in prayer and other religious acts which every one of us, I doubt not, has to lament and strive against. "It is the fault," he says, "of those who pray without earnestness, who meditate seldom, or without fruit, or sense, or affection; who rarely examine their consciences, and then but sleepily, slightly, without compunction, or hearty purpose, or fruits of amendment."* His care in warning us against this insidious lethargy of the spirit, and his directions for overcoming it, will not suffer by comparison with the tender sympathy and the gentle treatment which St. Francis of Sales has bestowed on the same infirmity under the name of "spiritual dryness."

I say not that Taylor has perfectly worked out his design, or that he has been invariably faithful to the method which he proposed to himself. If, for instance, we desire to meditate with him on the two closely allied virtues of truthfulness and courage, and their opposites, which are also nearly related, untruthfulness and cowardice, we find that he has only touched on them incidentally here and there. In a scientific treatise

* 'H. L.' iv. 3. It will be seen that this and the preceding paragraphs have reference to the comments on the 'Holy

Living and Dying' made by the Dean of Norwich in Lecture III. (above, pp. 65, 67).

on moral theology, this would be a serious defect; in a devotional work we can readily yield ourselves to the author's train of thought, without inquiring whether all the parts hold together in strict sequence and due proportion.

The 'Holy Dying,' like the 'Holy Living,' was called forth by a special occasion, being intended by the author to minister to the domestic sorrows of his friend and neighbour Lord Carbery. He calls it in his dedication the first entire body of directions for sick and dying people that he remembers to have been published in the Church of England. In the Church of Rome there had been many: but misliking these, and being almost forced to walk alone, he drew his rules and advices from the fountains of Scripture, and the purest channels of the primitive Church, with such help as he had from his own experience in the cure of souls. And this he did, having scarce any other possibility left him, he says, of doing alms, or exercising that charity by which we shall be judged at doomsday. Here he is by turns persuasive, tender, and severe. As we read, we can believe him equally capable of binding up the broken heart of his widowed friend at Golden Grove, and of exercising a righteous sternness, and refusing to give the sacrament to Lord Herbert of Cherbury, unless the dying infidel would recant the opinions which he had published. He aims at no deep philosophy, enters into no subtle mental analysis. He pointedly disclaims all attempt to "please the speculative part of man." He is intensely practical, having this chiefly in view, the nearness of the soul to death and eternity. His object is fourfold: I. To help us in our meditations on the shortness and uncertainty of life; II. To press on us the necessity of making the whole of life a preparation for the hour of death; III. To discourse on the state of sickness, and the temptations, the blessings, the Christian graces which are specially connected with that state; and IV. To assist the clergy in their visitation of the sick.

Very characteristic is the way in which he commences his rules of patience, bidding us "at the first presence of sickness gather up our spirit, and consider that this is what we always looked for, and were certain must one day happen. Therefore we must set our heart firmly on this resolution: I must bear it inevitably, and by God's grace I will bear it nobly." And though he resorts to a somewhat forced similitude, when he compares the man surprised by sickness to the Libyan lion, lashing himself with his tail when first he spies the huntsman and feels the wound of the Mauritanian spear; yet if his object was to make a lively and lasting impression on the reader, it must be allowed that the ingenious illustration has not been used in vain.

Again, what comfort there is in the reflection, that sickness, though in itself an evil, puts away from us many of the troubles, which cling to us inseparably in health; and that the worst sickness is better than the most pleasant sin. Very needful also and encouraging are the considerations which he urges against unreasonable spiritual fears. And as to the natural fear of death, how well he enlarges on the saying of the Latin poet, which Lord Bacon also had in view in his 'Essay on Death,' "*Pompa mortis magis tenet quam mors ipsa*," "There is more to appal us in the ceremonies attendant upon death than in death itself;" a truth which, if it has long been acknowledged, we are now almost as far from acting upon as even the contemporaries of Seneca, of Bacon, and of Taylor.

He who has made the 'Holy Dying' his companion, not on the sick bed only, but long before the "presence of sickness," and in anticipation of it, will have been taught to fear no evil, and to look confidently to the rod and the staff of the Good Shepherd for his support, when the valley of the dark shadow lies before him, and the light shines more and more brightly on the everlasting hills that are beyond.

It is an agreeable feature in this book that the style of it varies considerably with the subject-matter. Where flowers of fancy would be out of place, as in laying down the motive and defining the limits of obedience to human laws,* the style is as concise and terse as that of the 'Codex' itself, which Taylor often quotes. At other times he pleads with the soul in passionate expostulation, reminding us of the 'Imitatio Christi.' His familiarity with the 'Imitatio' appears from the frequent use he makes of it, often borrowing from it *verbatim*, in the excellent maxims which he published shortly before the 'Holy Living and Dying,' under the title of the 'Via Pacis.'†

But in general we are borne along in this book on a copious and stately stream, often diffuse, not always smooth, but never turbid; free from the pedantic conceits and efforts at verbal wit, which were at that time in favour, and which disfigure the writings of some of our great divines, as of Thomas Fuller and Bishop Andrewes.

Taylor brought to this work all his extraordinary powers of illustration. He is never at a loss for quotation, anecdote, allusion, to give freshness to the most trite and obvious truths. His imagery is not often derived, like that of Fuller, from his intercourse with the world, or from the resources of a sportive wit, but chiefly from his stores of ancient learning. Next to the Holy Scriptures, he makes most frequent reference to the classical writers of Greece and Rome; then to the Greek and Latin fathers of the Church. Among the moderns

* 'H. L.' iii. 1.

† Compare—

'Via Pacis,' 11,	with 'Im. Chr.' i.	4, 1
" 12, "	"	i. 4, 2
" 13, "	"	i. 4, 2
" 16, "	"	i. 7, 2
" 20, "	"	i. 10, 1
" 24, "	"	i. 12, 1
" 32, "	"	i. 19, 3

'Via Pacis,' 35, with 'Im. Chr.' i. 21, 2

" 36, " " i. 21, 3

" 46, " " i. 23, 4

The 'Via Pacis' might with great advantage be appended to future editions of the 'Holy Living,' both as a contrast to it in style and as a supplement to its contents.

one or two Italian writers are cited, and only one English author.*

England already possessed a literature of which she had no cause to be ashamed, had she been conscious of it. But her great writers were not yet recognised as authorities. They awaited the test of time, the judgment of successive generations. The stage had been silenced. Shakspeare was little known; no sayings of his had as yet become familiar in men's mouths, as household words. Throughout the republic of letters the ancients received more attention and more deference than is accorded to them at the present day. It could not be otherwise in an age so little removed from the epoch of the Renaissance: but Taylor has done us good service by giving prominence to the best moral sayings of heathen poets and philosophers, and so making it evident that God never "left Himself without witness" in men's hearts; † that there was a *præparatio evangelica*, a preparation for the Gospel, among Gentiles, as among Jews, before the Gospel came.

And in some degree a frequent reference to heathen writers was rendered appropriate, if not necessary, by the general plan of the work, according to which, as we have already observed, ‡ the rules of morality and good living are deducible from inherent and fundamental principles of human nature, existing independently of special revelation.

It is not to be supposed, however, that because Taylor refers but seldom to the writers of his own country, he was not well acquainted with them. There are in his works many indications to the contrary. An eloquent passage on the fear of

* The references in the 'Holy Living' are approximately as follows: to heathen writers—Greek 116, Latin 84, total 200; Jewish 5; Christian fathers—Greek 14, Latin 41, total 55; Acts of Councils, 2; the 'Codex,' 5; Moderns—Latin 1, French 1, Italian 24, Eng-

lish 0. The references in the 'Holy Dying' appear to be in like proportion, except that one English work, Weaver's 'Funeral Monuments,' is several times referred to.

† Acts xiv. 17; Rom. ii. 153.

‡ See above, p. 153.

death, of which I have just spoken,* was probably suggested by a sentence in one of Lord Bacon's essays. A remark made by Fuller in his 'Holy State,' that the Reformers had hitherto been defective in "Case-Divinity," and were beholden to the Romanists for what they knew of it, was manifestly in the mind of Taylor when he wrote the preface to the 'Ductor Dubitantium,' and may even have set him upon supplying the want which it pointed out, by the production of that elaborate and interesting, though somewhat neglected, treatise. And though he quotes none of the English poets, not even Spenser, whose genius was so nearly akin to his own, he shows himself conversant with their works, by his complaint that "they appeared to consider divine things unworthy of their poesy."†

How readily he resorts to ancient authorities, setting them sometimes unduly in the foreground, one or two instances will suffice to show.

He is recommending a yearly retreat from the world for prayer, confession, reflection, renewal of holy vows, and correction of careless ways; and to make more easy this annual introspection of ourselves, he advises that "every night before going to bed the actions of the past day be examined with a particular scrutiny, if there have been any accident, such as long discourse, much business, or much company." He is here pointing out a way by which the apostolic command, that we should judge ourselves, may best be complied with: and for the mode of doing this, for the practice of recalling every night the doings and sayings of the day, he cites the 'Golden Verses' of Pythagoras, which, if not actually composed by the philosopher whose name they bear, are undoubtedly of heathen origin. "Never yield thyself to sleep," says the heathen sage,

* See above, p. 156.

† This was said in a letter to Evelyn, A.D. 1656, about the time when Milton

was beginning to work upon the sacred epic which he had so long had in contemplation.

"till thou hast gone over all the doings of the day, and asked thyself, 'In what have I transgressed, what have I done, what good have I left undone?'"* The precept was for ages misunderstood even by the disciples of the Pythagorean philosophy, as a recent French writer has abundantly proved; but it was strictly observed by the pagan emperor Marcus Aurelius; and the Church adopted it and made it her own, with this essential addition, that we must pray God to pardon our sins, and give us grace to amend our lives, for our Saviour Christ's sake. In support of this good practice, familiar to many a humble-minded Christian in every age, Taylor adduces the precept of a heathen philosopher. Nor is he to be blamed for this; he does well to give heathenism its due: but as a Minister of the Gospel, instructing a Christian people, he would have done well also to make it appear that the practice has the sanction of Christian authority and example.

* Μηδ' ὕπνον μαλακοῦσιν ἐπ' ὀμμασί
προσδέξασθαι, πρὶν τῶν ἡμερινῶν ἔργων
τρίς ἑκάστον ἐπελθεῖν, πῇ παρέβην, τί
δ' ἔρεξα, τί μοι δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη; See
'H. L.' i. 1, and again, more fully,
'H. D.' ii. 2.

The 'Revue des deux Mondes' of 15th May 1875 has an interesting article by Monsieur Constant Martha, of the Institut, the object of which is to show that this Pythagorean precept was for many ages erroneously supposed to be a direction for improving the memory, by recalling at night all that has passed in the course of the day. M. Martha traces this misapprehension through the writings of Cicero and Diodorus Siculus, of Porphyry and Iamblicus in the third and fourth centuries, and of other commentators on the Pythagorean philosophy, down to and including Fénelon. Meanwhile the precept was rightly understood by the Stoics, e. g. by Seneca, Epictetus, and M. Aurelius, the last of whom strictly enforced it upon himself, and

by the later Platonists, e. g. by Hierocles of Alexandria, in the fifth century. The writer goes on to show that the precept was adopted by the Christian Church, and gives examples of the excess to which this self-examination was carried by the over-scrupulous conscience: he mentions the penitential tablets of the monks, the method used by Franklin for registering his sins, and the observance of this precept as their only rule of life by the French sect of the Theophilanthropists, in the year 5 of the Republic: and he sums up the curious history in these words:—

"Ainsi, par une bizarre fortune, le précepte des 'Vers d'Or,' mal compris pendant des siècles, puis recueilli par les plus grandes doctrines philosophiques, enfin jugé digne de devenir chrétien, parut encore la dernière ressource des candides novateurs, et dans la ruine universelle des cultes fut regardé comme l'unique et solide soutien de la morale publique et privée."

Again, it may be thought that, in his admiration of the ancients, he almost loses sight for a moment of his office as a Christian teacher, when he refers with seeming approval, and certainly without censure, to the Roman practice of seeking escape from a dishonoured life by a self-inflicted death. "Paulus Æmilius," he says, "did handsomely reprove the cowardice of the king of Macedon, who begged of him for pity's sake and humanity, that having conquered him and taken his kingdom from him, he would be content with that, and not lead him in triumph prisoner to Rome. Æmilius told him he need not be beholden to him for that; *himself might prevent that in spite of him*. But the timorous king durst not die." He goes on to say, "Every wise man will easily believe that the tyrant of Sicily (Dionysius) better had perished in the Adriatic than to be wafted to Corinth safely, and there turn schoolmaster." This looks like saying that the ways of God's providence might be ordered for us better than they are. But doubtless he would have seen the impropriety of this remark if he had applied it to his own case. He, like Dionysius, was keeping school, in exile and poverty; but it would never have occurred to him to regret that he had been released from his prison at Cardigan, and that he had not perished in the storm which threatened shipwreck to both Church and State. And as to his momentary aberration, if such it was, on the subject of self-murder, we are fully reassured when we come to his explanation of the decalogue, and find there the simple and emphatic declaration, that the sixth commandment is broken by him "who hastens *his own* or another's death."*

Some of Taylor's most charming illustrations are derived from Nature. Being at this time almost entirely debarred from the use of books, he had more leisure and probably more inclination for the loving observation of rural sights and

* · H. D.' iii. 7; iv. 8.

sounds: and the works which he composed during his residence in Wales have been thought to be specially rich in natural images. In this book, for example, he compares the passions "which petulantly solicit a man in health" with "the atoms in the sunshine, always dancing, and always busy, and never sitting down, till night draws the veil." He had probably been looking out on the vale in which he dwelt, and on the hills which bounded his view, when he likened the voice of a dying man to "the faint echo of a distant valley," and when in words which may have given a hint to the author of 'Rasselas' he says that to complain of God's providence is as unreasonable as "to find fault with the rich valleys of Thasus, because they are circled with sharp mountains."*

The prayers which follow each chapter of the 'Holy Living and Dying,' intended to help the reader in applying what he has been reading to a devotional use, are sometimes spoken of as the least satisfactory portion of the book. A prayer which is composed for private use should be at once fervent and simple in its language, not diffuse, not argumentative, not rhetorical. Taylor's prayers too often offend in one or other of these respects. They are not always natural in their sentiment, nor simple in

* 'H. D.' iii. 6; ii. 4; 'H. L.' ii. 6; and see Willmott's 'Life of Taylor,' p. 127. The allusion to "the rich valleys of Thasus" is not explained in any of the editions of the 'Holy Living,' but was no doubt suggested by a passage of Plutarch (one of Taylor's favourite authors), who complains of the poet Archilochus for overlooking the fruitful districts and vineyards of Thasos (*τὰ καρποφόρα καὶ οἰνόπεδα*), and giving the island a bad name because of its rocky and uneven surface (*διὰ τὸ τραχὺ καὶ ἀνώμαλον διέβαλε τὴν νήσον*), saying that "it is like an ass's back-bone, crowned with savage woods," *Ἡδ' ὥστ' ὄνου ῥάχιν ἔστηκεν ὕλης ἀγρίας ἐπιστεφής*. See Plut. 'De Exil.

Archilochus,' *Fragm. ix.* (ed. Liebel). Mr. Grote ('Hist. Greece,' iv. 34) adopts the description of Archilochus, without noticing Plutarch's comment upon it, which is borne out by the coins of the island, betokening the cultivation of the vine by the device which they bear, the head of Bacchus.

It seems not an extravagant supposition that, by musing on these few words of Taylor, Dr. Johnson, who was a reader and admirer of Taylor's works, may have been led to represent his Abyssinian prince scorning the happy valley, and endeavouring to find his way over the sharp mountains by which it was surrounded.

their expression. They betray the art with which they have been framed. Yet, with all their faults, they have, on the whole, great beauty, freshness, and variety of thought; and the intelligent reader will find it an edifying and a pleasant exercise to modify them in such a way as shall adapt them to his own spiritual necessities.

But we must dwell no longer either on the beauties or the blemishes of this work: enough has been said, if you are led to observe them for yourselves, not in a critical spirit, but so that, according to the saying of St. Paul, "your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent."* It only remains for us now to enforce what has been said already, that the 'Holy Dying' is not for those only whom sickness admonishes to prepare for their latter end. It teaches how to die by teaching how to live. In many respects it is supplementary to the 'Holy Living,' which, if considered by itself, will often be found wanting, where the sister treatise happily abounds. Let us take only one case of this, and then conclude. The subject is repentance. The motives by which this duty is urged on the sinner in the 'Holy Living' are these two—(1) that if he does not repent, he will certainly perish; (2) that if he does repent and lead a godly life, he will be forgiven, he will be saved. We assent to this statement, but not unreservedly, not without a feeling that something is left unsaid which ought to be said, and that a still higher, if not a stronger, motive than the fear of perdition and the hope of salvation remains to be brought forward. And in the 'Holy Dying' we find that higher motive placed in the very front. There he renews, in more solemn terms, his appeal to the guilty conscience; and while he says most truly that sickness is the proper scene for patience and resignation and the passive graces, but is not

* Phil. i. 9, 10.

often a favourable condition for undertaking the work of repentance, because the mind is enfeebled by it as well as the body, yet he presses the sick man not only with the motives which he had urged on the man in health, viz. religious fear and hope, but also with a nobler, because a disinterested, motive. The main principle of his repentance is to be "contrition" or "sorrow for sin, arising from the love of God."*

The incentives to this heavenly love, kindled in us by God's love to sinners, are set forth by Taylor in his most persuasive manner: and as we read, we cannot but feel that every word which is here spoken to the sick and the dying may be addressed with equal cogency to those who are likely to live and to have space granted them for true repentance and amendment of life.

The motive of fear, the dread of God's righteous judgments, cannot in the present state of things be dispensed with altogether; though to some of us it is more needful than to others. But how true is the saying of the Apostle that "fear hath torment." Fear, as the dominant motive of the heart, is to be endured only for a season, until hope and love shall be reared to take its place. Hope will spring up quickly, and will seem to prevail over fear, yet is not able always to keep the upper hand; hope is unstable, is easily discouraged, and never is quite free from fear. Only one thing, only perfect love, can entirely and for ever cast out fear and bring in the abundance of peace and joy. And though perfect love is in this life unattainable, yet we may approach to it more and more nearly by the continual lifting up of our heart to God; and the more nearly perfect we are in love, the more will our fears die away, the holier we shall be, the more at peace within ourselves, the more full of joy.

* 'H. L.' iv. 9; 'H. D.' iii. 6, &c.

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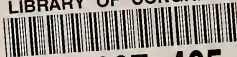
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